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THE Public Interest

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Timothy Taylor

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BOOKS IN REVIEW: *Wilfred M. McClay, John J. DiIulio Jr., Roger Kimball, and Eric Cohen*

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Thinking about a "New Economy"

TIMOTHY TAYLOR

THE Industrial Revolution that began about 200 years ago lives in the collective memory as a cavalcade of inventors and machines: James Watt and the steam engine, Eli Whitney and the cotton gin, Cyrus McCormick and the reaper, Charles Goodyear and vulcanized rubber, and many more. But the Industrial Revolution brought a remarkable change in the human condition that went beyond any particular invention. It instilled a belief that the standard of living did not have to be forever stagnant.

Looking back from today's privileged vantage point, after two centuries of economic growth, it may be impossible to feel in our bones what it meant to live in a world without economic progress. Consider, for example, the note of genuine wonder in the voice of Karl Marx, writing of the new realities in the *Communist Manifesto* in 1848:

> The bourgeoisie during its rule of scarce one hundred years has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together. Subjection of nature's

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> forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam-navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalization of rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground—what earlier century had even a presentiment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labour?

Modern economists, with their highly developed talent for reducing the drama of human production and consumption to dry statistics, describe the Industrial Revolution more simply: It was the era when economic growth in countries like the United States rose from essentially nothing to 2 percent per year. This 2 percent growth rate should not be understood as a physical constant like the boiling point of water but rather as a rough guideline to the average experience of the most highly developed economies over the last two centuries.

A 2 percent growth rate may sound small to those who have not doodled with a calculator and the magic of compound growth rates. But, at a humble 2 percent per capita annual rate of growth, the average standard of living doubles in 36 years; quadruples in 72 years; and will rise roughly 50-fold over two centuries. The change from almost no increase in the average standard of living over several millennia, until 1800, to a 50-fold increase in the next two centuries is what the Industrial Revolution has meant to those who live in developed countries.

In recent years, there has been considerable discussion of whether the development and application of information and communications technology have changed the U.S. economy in a fundamental way, promising a golden future of rapid growth, low unemployment and inflation, perpetual economic expansion, and a booming stock market. The change is sometimes called the "Information Revolution"; more commonly, it is called the "New Economy." While there is sound evidence that the U.S. economy has experienced a revival in productivity growth since the mid 1990s, the argument that it has undergone either a fundamental shift in its patterns or a change on the scale of the Industrial Revolution appears overblown.

What's in a name?

There are three distinct senses in which the development

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and dispersion of information and communications technology could qualify as a "revolution." One would be that just as the Industrial Revolution increased the annual per capita rate of growth by two percentage points a year, from zero to 2 percent, the Information Revolution should raise the per capita growth rate by an additional two percentage points, from 2 percent to 4 percent. Such a change would represent a phenomenal shift in the human condition. Again doodling with a calculator, an annual per capita growth rate of 4 percent per year, sustained over two centuries, would mean a staggering 2,500-fold increase in the standard of living.

A less exacting standard for the Information Revolution would be that a new set of inventions will carry the economy forward at its 2 percent annual growth rate. After all, the key generators of the 2 percent rate of growth have varied over time. Economic historians often count two or three distinct Industrial Revolutions over the last several centuries. The twentieth century alone has seen the commercialization and dispersion of inventions like electricity, the internal combustion engine, and the chemical industry. It has seen a shift in the emphasis of the economy from farming to manufacturing to services. Each of these shifts can be labeled as "revolutions." This interpretation of the Information Revolution may seem bland, pedestrian, and emotionally unsatisfying—but that doesn't make it wrong.

The third possible meaning of the Information Revolution looks at gains or changes not reflected in the numbers. The argument that economic statistics are inadequate is always true, and it is eternally popular among those who are having trouble proving their point. But the claim that social gains are not captured by economic statistics is not a free pass to assert any and all conclusions. After all, economic statistics do capture a number of salient factors, like corporate profits, wages, and the size of gross domestic product (GDP). Thus, the Information Revolution means in this case that we will all *feel* that the new technologies have changed our world even though we see no special change in such tangible measures as wages and GDP growth.

Before trying to unravel how information technology may change the economy in measured, unmeasured, and even

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unmeasurable ways, it is useful to begin by exploring what the productivity statistics say.

Productivity growth in the 1990s

U.S. productivity growth in the last 50 years is typically divided into three periods. In the first period, running from 1950 to 1973, productivity (as measured by growth of output per labor hour in the business sector) rose at 3.0 percent per year. This period of relatively rapid growth has been attributed to many factors: the application of new technologies, especially those that had been developed during World War II; a burst of pent-up economic energy after the dark economic times of the 1930s; and growth of global trade.

Then productivity slowed down. From 1973 to 1995, productivity growth averaged just 1.4 percent per year. The years from 1973 to 1982 were worst of all: Over that time, productivity grew at only 0.9 percent per year. From 1982 to 1995, productivity grew a bit more briskly at 1.7 percent per year. Various events of the 1970s might explain the slower productivity: higher oil prices, higher inflation, a slowdown in government research and development spending after the Apollo moon landing, the growth of environmental legislation, and so on. But no single factor, nor any combination of factors, has proven sufficient to explain the depth and length of the productivity slowdown.

The default explanation for the slowdown was that the 1950s and 1960s had been an extraordinary time, following in the aftermath of world wars and depression, and that perhaps more modest growth rates were all a highly developed economy like the United States could expect. But then productivity bounced back, growing at an annual rate of 2.9 percent per year from 1995 to mid 2000. A lusty academic dispute in recent years has sought to explain the reasons for the turnaround. The standard methodology for these "growth-accounting" studies is to try to explain the overall rise in productivity by tracing it to gains in different sectors of the economy. Interestingly, studies done by both believers in, and skeptics of, the Information Revolution reach many of the same conclusions.

For example, they agree that business investment in computers and related equipment, which quadrupled from 1995 to

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1999, is one main reason for the recent surge in productivity. The average worker is now working with more powerful technology than a few years ago. This involves more than faster personal computers; it also means better computer-aided design and manufacturing and better information systems for tying together inventories, purchasing, and accounting.

Moreover, it is broadly agreed that faster productivity growth in the production of computers themselves—especially in the underlying semiconductor chips—explains part of the productivity increase. The price of computing power had been falling about 15 percent per year in the late 1980s and first half of the 1990s, but beginning in the mid 1990s, it started to fall by 30 percent per year.

Yet another area of broad agreement is that commerce over the Internet—whether of the business-to-consumer or business-to-business variety—has nothing to do with the surge in productivity since 1995. By the end of 2000, only about half of Americans had a home connection to the Internet, and most of those connections were over painfully slow telephone modems. Business-to-consumer e-commerce was about $30 billion in 2000, or 1 percent of retail sales. In mid 2000, only about one-third of American manufacturing firms had even started using the Internet for buying inputs or for sales. Business-to-business e-commerce was about $140 billion in 2000, about 1 percent of business-to-business sales. One can sketch plausible scenarios in which e-commerce offers dramatic productivity gains in the next few years. But it hasn't been large enough over the last five years to have been driving economy-wide productivity trends.

Probably the main area of disagreement in these growth-accounting studies is whether the majority of the productivity increase in the past five years should be viewed as an increase in the long-term trend or as a short-term blip. At a conceptual level, productivity is economic output divided by inputs. When GDP growth is red-hot, as it was during much of the late 1990s, it boosts the productivity statistics by driving up the ratio of outputs to inputs. For example, real GDP, projected at an annual rate, grew at a rate of 5.7 percent in the third quarter of 1999 and a whopping 8.3 percent in the fourth quarter. But when the pace of economic growth settles some-

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what—not necessarily because of a recession but simply because of a more moderate pace of growth—then productivity growth will also be slower.

Those economists who are most sanguine about the Information Revolution give it the lion's share of credit for boosting productivity by about 1 percent per year. The pessimists, who fear that a substantial share of the productivity resurgence is partly due to unsustainably fast short-term growth, give information technology credit for only about 0.6 percent of the annual increase in productivity growth.

Those who don't conduct growth-accounting studies might be forgiven for focusing on the implicit level of agreement here, rather than the remaining disagreement. In 2000, the U.S. GDP will be roughly $10 trillion. Before the productivity surge of the mid 1990s, it was plausible to project that GDP would grow at a real rate of 2.7 percent per year—a growth rate including the 1.7 percent productivity growth of the 1980s and early 1990s and 1 percent per year growth in labor hours worked. At this growth rate, the economy would reach $17 trillion after 20 years. However, productivity gains of 0.8 percent per year due to the Information Revolution (splitting the difference between optimists and pessimists) could cause the economy to grow at 3.5 percent annually, counting 2.5 percent productivity growth and 1 percent per year growth in hours worked. After 20 years of this higher growth rate, GDP would reach nearly $20 trillion.

In short, the additional GDP from the Information Revolution could within two decades be a direct cause of $3 trillion per year in output, which at that point would represent about one-seventh of the entire economy. The power of increasing growth rates by even small percentages, if sustained over decades, is phenomenal.

The wonders of e-commerce

Technology enthusiasts often assert that the New Economy is already upon us. But, for the sake of clarity, it is important to keep one's verb tenses straight. Although the U.S. economy has experienced a strong surge of investment in ever-faster computers over the last five years, the bow wave of the e-commerce revolution is just beginning to rock the economy.

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This is good news, because it opens up the exciting possibility that the Information Revolution will have staying power. The future prospects of e-commerce are especially important because the underlying sources of increased productivity growth over the last five years won't last forever.

For some years now, semiconductor-industry insiders have been pointing out that the process of etching ever-smaller computer chips will, at some point, run into physical limits. Current chip technology involves working at a scale of nanometers—billionths of a meter. At this scale, electrons sometimes hop unpredictably across very small distances. The tendency of certain molecules to clump together, which doesn't matter at a larger scale, poses a production problem. To overcome these sorts of problems, even a continuation of the brilliant engineering advances of the last few decades won't be enough. It seems plausible that the rate of increase in chip technology could slow substantially.

The surge in information-technology investment in the last five years will be increasingly difficult to duplicate in the future as well. Certainly, investment in computers will continue rising, but it will be difficult to repeat the quadrupling of such investment that occurred over the last five years in the next five years—and it would be even harder to quadruple yet again in the five years after that. It's always easier to quadruple from a smaller base than from a larger one.

Thus if the Information Revolution is to last for the medium run, it cannot rely only on improvements in computer chips and increases in technology investment. The underlying drivers of productivity growth will have to shift. In the medium term, it is e-commerce that can potentially maintain the Information Revolution and productivity growth.

As the economy absorbs any new technology, what typically happens first is that existing economic activities are performed at lower cost. E-commerce is no exception. A professor of mine used to say, more than half-seriously, that the typical job in the U.S. economy involved picking up a piece of paper, looking at it, and then taking some action. Indeed, about 40 percent of all U.S. workers are in what the Bureau of Labor Statistics classifies as "sales occupations," "administrative support," or "executive, administrative, and managerial jobs." The

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new information and communications technologies seem likely to transform these kinds of jobs, which often involve tasks like finding out what supplies a factory needs and what it has in inventory, checking availability and price with competing suppliers, placing an order, determining a delivery schedule, confirming receipt of order, being billed, paying the bill, and including the transaction in company records and accounting statements. With an e-commerce system, a supplier can learn automatically of a shortage of supplies at one company. The placement of the order, confirmation, updates about delivery schedules, billing, payment, receipts, and accounting are all built into the system. The costs of the transaction fall dramatically: that is, fewer phone calls, hand-scrawled and typed reports, double-checking by departments, and lost or mismatched records. Only a few firms have gone through the deep organizational changes needed to become web-based organizations, but those that have done so have achieved remarkable results, like cutting administrative costs by 75 percent.

In addition, because of tighter, faster links between suppliers and buyers, there is less need to have inventories sitting in warehouses. Since the U.S. economy holds about $1.1 trillion in inventories, gains in this area will mean a few hundred billion dollars worth of stuff not sitting around gathering dust. Thus, although the first stage of the Information Revolution over the last five years has been characterized by high investment in more powerful computers, the second stage, over the next decade, seems likely to be characterized by a dramatic change in how transactions are carried out and processed.

Welcome to "web world"

The economic gains from reducing transaction costs and holding down inventories are potentially enormous—but again, they are also self-limiting. While the costs of transactions and the levels of inventories can be cut, in the nature of things those costs will never fall below zero. Market forces will encourage firms to seek out the juiciest cost-cutting targets first, but once the low-hanging apples are picked, it will become harder and harder to squeeze out further cost savings. If the Information Revolution is to last beyond the next decade, and if it is to rival society-transforming inventions like the internal

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combustion engine, it will have to do more than reduce paperwork and empty out some inventory warehouses. It will need to change how people live in fundamental ways.

When thinking about the possibilities of this stage of the Information Revolution, one leaves behind hard data and enters the realm of plausible speculation. It's useful to begin by visualizing the technology as it someday may be. The Internet, as we presently know it, is a technological marvel but also clunky, buggy, and slow. Now imagine web pages that appear as quickly as a television set changes channels, with television-style clarity, movement, and sound. Think about calling up these web pages with voice commands, or some form of channel clicker or mouse, not with laboriously typed web addresses. The great increase in speed will make these web pages interactive: Ask a question, get an immediate answer. Now combine all this with hand-held, wireless access to the Internet, with communications anywhere in the world at costs lower than today's long-distance telephone rates. Just for fun, or perhaps for terror, mix in the capability of the global positioning system to know exactly where you are in relation to everything else and databases that have complete records of your past purchases and viewing habits. In a decade or two, I suspect that we will look back on the current state of the Internet the way we reminisce about black-and-white photographs or old radio programs.

A technological change of this magnitude clearly has the potential to alter patterns of work, consumption, business production, education, health care, entertainment, recreation—perhaps even what is meant by friendship. Perhaps the most intriguing possibility of all is that a "web-based world" will produce a more powerful synergy of ideas, as widely distributed groups of people work separately and yet in close touch with each other. The ultimate constraint, which no computer will change, is that each person has only 168 hours per week. But the Information Revolution could eventually lead to dramatic changes in how we spend those hours.

Social changes and economic gains

True believers in the New Economy often argue that focusing on economic statistics misses the point of what the Infor-

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mation Revolution means to people's experience, rather like attempting to summarize the running of an Olympic marathon by quoting finishing times. Certainly, the faithful have a point. For example, an online book-shopper has a broader range of titles at his disposal than what's available in a conventional bookstore. To be sure, it's harder for the online shopper to take a book off the shelf and skim a few paragraphs to see if it looks interesting, although improved technology will eventually overcome that problem. But in GDP statistics, it doesn't matter whether you have many choices or few; all that matters is the amount of money spent. As another example, imagine that the new information leads to a dramatic shift in how people spend their leisure time. Instead of the typical adult watching an average of 1,500 hours of television per year, he might spend that time playing interactive games on the Internet. Instead of going shopping at the mall and carrying everything home in bags, people will go to the mall to see and hold the products they wish to buy, and then order them from their homes via the Internet. But again, GDP statistics will measure sales only.

Economic statistics are not especially good at measuring the value of new products, either. The ability to watch a videotaped movie at home, on demand, is measured in GDP statistics as the rental price of the movie, not as an expansion of entertainment possibilities. The ability to check a bank balance and get cash 24 hours a day at an automated teller machine is measured in GDP statistics as the cost of banking services, not as an expansion of convenience. The ability to make a wireless phone call is measured in GDP as the cost of the call, not as improved ease of communication.

All of these reservations about the extent to which measured economic output captures social changes from technology are perfectly reasonable. But the complaints aren't new. The economists who invented GDP statistics in the 1940s and 1950s were quick to point out that gross domestic product measures only what is bought and sold in the economy, not the amount of human satisfaction received. And clearly, the social impact of great inventions of the past were captured only in part by economic statistics as well.

For example, the full social effects of the internal combus-

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tion engine include the growth of suburbs, the relocation of businesses out of cities, the appearance of the driving vacation, and an increase in the mobility of the average person. But GDP statistics measure only cars, gasoline, and houses, not the change in living patterns. A listing of the effects of the electrical dynamo would include the relocation of factories away from water power; the construction of skyscrapers; time-saving appliances like washing machines in the home, which arguably facilitated feminism's rise; and air-conditioning, making possible the great growth of southern cities. GDP hardly captures all or even most of these changes in how we live.

These historical examples should also make clear that the social changes of the first five years of the Information Revolution have not come anywhere close to the sort of seismic changes in location, family patterns, and human possibilities that occurred throughout the twentieth century. To be sure, a future stage of the Information Revolution may eventually bring such changes. The social implications of technologies like electricity and the internal combustion engine took decades to become apparent. But unless or until such changes occur within the next decade or two, the argument that the Information Revolution "changes everything," and in a way missed by economic statistics, is overblown rhetoric.

Sources of economic growth

The most optimistic claims for the Information Revolution go beyond productivity growth, whether measured or unmeasured, and include promises that the good economic news of recent years—low unemployment, low inflation, no recession, rising stock prices—will be sustained into the future. But although the U.S. economic performance in these areas in the last five years has indeed been spectacular, productivity growth is only one part of the overall story—and probably not the most important part.

Since 1997, the U.S. unemployment rate has been below 5 percent and the inflation rate has been below 3 percent. The last time these rates were this low for this long was back in the mid 1960s—not coincidentally, a time when productivity growth was also quite high. In the 1980s and early 1990s, it was common to hear economists argue that unemployment

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could not be reduced below 6 percent for a sustained period without leading to an overheated economy and inflationary pressures. Such predictions are clearly outdated.

There are a variety of possible reasons why unemployment dropped so low in the late 1990s. Sustained economic growth helped, of course. In addition, as the Baby Boomers have aged, a higher proportion of the workforce is in its prime working years, and thus more likely to cling to jobs or, if necessary, to find another job quickly. The rise of temporary agencies has made it easier to work while looking for work. The Internet may also be helping to reduce unemployment by streamlining the job-search process: Prospective employers and workers can more easily and quickly find one another.

The rise in productivity growth has also played a role in lower unemployment rates. When productivity is higher than expected, as occurred in the late 1990s, businesses perceive that they are getting an especially good value from hiring, and so become more eager to take on additional workers. This process operated in reverse in the 1970s and helped contribute to higher unemployment at that time. Because of the productivity slowdown of the 1970s, businesses saw themselves as receiving less than they had expected from hiring workers. As a result, their willingness to hire declined and unemployment stayed high.

Low inflation in recent years is also a result of several causes. The Federal Reserve has shown a willingness to raise interest rates when inflation threatens, taking a preemptive strike against inflation by raising interest rates back in 1995, and pursuing a series of increases late in 1999 and into 2000. When the central bank is clearly committed to keeping prices stable, it is difficult for an inflationary mindset or momentum to become established. In addition, lower oil prices in 1997 and 1998 helped hold down inflation at that time, although oil prices have since bounced up again.

The rise in productivity growth also held down inflation. Inflation results from an imbalance between the total demand in an economy and the total supply. If demand happens to race ahead of supply, then there are too many dollars chasing too few goods, and inflation rises. However, a surge in productivity means that the quantity of goods has risen more

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rapidly than expected, given the levels of inputs involved, and so inflationary pressures are muted. Again, in the 1970s, this process operated in reverse, helping demand to stay ahead of supply and inflation to stay high.

The links from higher productivity to lower unemployment and inflation are real, but they guarantee nothing about the future. Over the medium term, the amount paid to workers catches up to their productivity, and so the effect of an unexpected productivity boost on unemployment diminishes. There is some evidence in the wage data of the last two years that such a catch-up is occurring. The main determinant of inflation over time is the vigilance of the Federal Reserve and how it manages the supply of money and credit, and thus the power of demand in the economy. Unlucky events or poor public policies—or both together—can easily bring on another bout of unemployment or inflation. After all, several decades of rapid productivity growth in the 1950s and 1960s didn't prevent the stagflation of the 1970s and early 1980s.

The current economic expansion, which started in March 1991, is probably the longest in U.S. history, although economic statistics before about 1870 are unreliable. While the surge of productivity growth has contributed to the length of the expansion, it is, again, only part of the story. The second-longest economic expansion in U.S. history ran from February 1961 to December 1969, and the third-longest ran from November 1982 to July 1990. Thus the interesting question is not why the current expansion has been so long but why economic expansions in general seem to have lengthened in the last four decades. A variety of plausible answers have been proposed. Deposit-insurance legislation passed in the 1930s has made the banking system less fragile and prone to runs, which used to be a common source of economic instability. The federal government's expanded role in the economy—especially its willingness after the Second World War to run large budget deficits in times of recession—has had a stabilizing effect too. The Federal Reserve, which used to overreact to economic events, is now steering the economy more cautiously and capably.

Taken individually, these arguments have their strengths and weaknesses. But taken together, they are a far better

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explanation for the length of the present economic expansion than a surge in computer productivity circa 1995. Recessions have deep wellsprings in the dynamics of irrational exuberance and equally irrational doom and gloom that arise in a market-oriented, investment-driven economy. The Information Revolution will not cure economic mood swings.

Irrational exuberance?

The rapid rise in the stock market in the 1990s powerfully reinforced the belief that an Information Revolution had arrived. Despite the dismal performance of the stock market in 2000, the Dow Jones Industrial Average still more than doubled from 4,500 in 1995 to above 10,000 by the end of 2000. The NASDAQ stock index, which is made up disproportionately of technology-oriented firms, has risen even faster, from 1,000 in 1995 to nearly 3,000 by the end of 2000. But the Information Economy offers no guarantee that stocks will remain at their present levels, much less that they will keep rising.

At a basic statistical level, higher stock prices are not counted at all in measures of economic output. After all, every time one party buys a share of stock, another party must be selling it. The transaction involves a change of ownership, but nothing is produced. For similar reasons, GDP statistics include the sales of new homes, where something new is produced that year, but not the sales of existing homes, which are a transfer of ownership. The growth of GDP and productivity in the last five years has literally no direct connection to the stock market.

But some indirect connections have been suggested. For example, the claim is sometimes made that America's economic growth of the late 1990s was a virtuous circle where the economy boosted stock prices, higher stock prices encouraged higher consumption, consumption boosted the economy further, and so on. But each of these connections is partial, at best.

Although the strong economy has surely helped to boost stock prices, stock prices have risen much further than the economy alone would seem to justify. One benchmark for valuing stocks is the price-earnings (P/E) ratio, which is the price per share of a stock divided by the earnings per share of the stock. Historically, the P/E ratio for the market has been

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about 14; a little higher in good times, a little lower in bad times. Back in 1994 and 1995, for example, the P/E ratio was in the range of 16 to 17, well in line with historical experience for a period of economic expansion. But by early in 2000, the P/E ratio for the stock market as a whole—not just for a few high-flying technology stocks—was above 30. The price of stocks had far outstripped the rise in earnings, so that the state of the economy over the last five years is not nearly enough to account for the remarkable surge in stock market prices.

It also seems unlikely that the rising stock market has spurred vastly greater consumption. About half of all stock (including stock owned through pension funds) is owned by the top 1 percent of shareholders; about three-quarters of all stock is owned by the top 5 percent of shareholders. Thus there is little reason for most households, which have benefited a relatively small amount from the rise in stocks, to alter their consumption patterns as a result. Moreover, many people who own stock have it in retirement or pension accounts. They don't run out and buy a new car every time the stock market goes up. Yes, the rise in the stock market led to increased sales of Porsches and Jaguars in Silicon Valley. But, for the overall economy, mainstream estimates are that the rise in the stock market might account for one-tenth of the rise in consumption over the last five years.

The connection between the Information Revolution and the rise in the stock market is real, but loose. After all, when the NASDAQ stock index fell 50 percent in value between March and December 2000, it certainly didn't mean that the Information Revolution had suddenly ended or switched off. Financial markets do reflect the real economy, but in a funhouse mirror, susceptible to sudden distortions.

Looking ahead, there are two plausible scenarios for the stock market. One is that stock prices had climbed too high, perhaps driven in part by inexperienced day-traders using web-based technology to buy overpriced shares in overhyped technology companies; in this scenario, stock prices will stagnate or decline in the next few years. The alternative is that, for a variety of reasons, the old historical benchmarks like a P/E ratio of 14 no longer apply. It is possible that changes in

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patterns of corporate finance and accounting are making "earnings" appear smaller, and thus P/E ratios appear larger. Moreover, a broader group of investors has apparently become willing to risk putting money in the stock market in the last 15 years. With broader entry into the stock market and changes in finance patterns in mind, one can construct a plausible case that stock prices will hold their own or increase slowly over the next few years.

My own view is that a well-diversified stock portfolio remains the most sensible investment for those with long time horizons. But the stock market's glory days of the late 1990s are done. It seems extremely unlikely—whatever the course of the Information Revolution—that stock prices will double or triple in the next five years, as they have in the last five.

The not-so-new New Economy

In the mid 1990s, the U.S. economy experienced a substantial rise in productivity growth, based on a wave of investment in faster computer technology. The economy now appears to be entering a second stage of productivity growth, which will be based on using information technology to revolutionize the way transactions are done. Recognizing these facts, even mainstream economic forecasters, like the Congressional Budget Office and the Office of Management and Budget, have built a rise of about 1 percentage point per year in productivity growth into their medium-term predictions. If this higher productivity can be sustained over a decade or two, the change will be a momentous one, representing literally trillions of dollars of additional output each year.

But momentous is not the same as unprecedented. From a macroeconomic perspective, the New Economy isn't really new. After all, productivity growth rates averaged about 3.0 percent per year in the 1950s and 1960s. The 1960s also saw low unemployment, low inflation, a booming stock market, and what was then the longest economic expansion in U.S. history. But the stagflation of the 1970s—resulting from a combination of unlucky economic events and ill-conceived public policy—arrived nonetheless.

The claim that the Information Revolution has shifted the fundamental patterns of the economy is based on the all-too-

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human failing of myopic hindsight. In this case, it manifests itself as a cocksure belief—often implicit rather than explicit—that no previous generation has seen a degree of technological change that can match the computer and the Internet. But consider the lives of my grandmothers, who were born around 1900 and lived into the 1990s. When they were born, the United States already had the highest standard of living of any country. But they grew up in Midwestern homes that, as was typical of the time, had no electricity or plumbing. In their lifetimes, they saw indoor plumbing and electric lighting; machines for washing clothes and dishes; cars and the creation of highways and suburbs; telephones; antibiotics and the birth of modern medicine; commercial air travel; home entertainment options from radio to recorded music to movies to television; and even the Apollo moon landing.

I was born in 1960. Certainly, I will see technological marvels in my lifetime that would be unimaginable to my grandmothers. But based on a comparison of the first 40 years of our lives—what they saw between 1900 and 1940 and what I have lived through since 1960—it is far from obvious that I will see in my lifetime a larger degree of technological, social, or economic change than they saw in theirs.

The Information Revolution is by no means *sui generis*. It is best viewed as a new chapter in the book that opened with the original Industrial Revolution, two centuries ago. Like previous chapters involving steam power, the reaper, the telegraph, chemicals, railroads, electricity, telephones, automobiles, and antibiotics, the Information Revolution will generate substantial economic growth and social change over a period of decades. Like the previous chapters, the Information Revolution will be distinctive in its details. But from a broader perspective, the levels of productivity growth, unemployment, and inflation, along with the likelihood of recessions and stock-market crashes, will remain within the range of experience of the last half-century. The Information Revolution is more evolution than revolution.

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Religion in the 2000 election

GERTRUDE HIMMELFARB

A RECENT survey of the role of religion in American life opens: "Few Americans were surprised to find religion a continuing leitmotif in the past year's presidential election."[1] In fact, most Americans were surprised when religion began to emerge as an issue in the electoral campaign. And they will be even more surprised to find just how prominent it proved to be in the election itself—and continues to be today, both in society and in the polity.

Perhaps we should not have been surprised. Yet we were, again and again, when Vice President Al Gore chose Senator Joe Lieberman (an observant Jew) as his running mate, and when, in the course of the campaign, both Governor George W. Bush and Senator Lieberman spoke candidly about their own religious beliefs. Even in the aftermath of the election

[1] Steve Farkas, et al., *For Goodness' Sake: Why So Many Want Religion to Play a Greater Role in American Life* (Public Agenda, 2001).

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we continued to be surprised, by a presidential inaugural address that was eloquently religious; by the controversy over John Ashcroft that focused on his religious beliefs; by the creation, as one of the first official acts of the new administration, of an Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives—"faith-based," a term once associated with evangelicals, having now entered the public domain. Instead of complaints from the "religious right" (no longer so called because it no longer seems so much on the right) about the absence of religion in "the public square," we now hear complaints from the "secular left" (never so called because it was so dominant as not to require any label) about the ubiquity of religion in the public square.

We have come a long way in the course of only a year. Yet the evidence had been there for decades, obscured by a media and academia that were—still are—staunchly secular. There has always been statistical proof of the pervasiveness and depth of American religiosity, all the more striking because it is in such dramatic contrast to other Western countries. (American "exceptionalism" yet again.) But the barrage of statistics emerging from the recent election is more compelling than ever—and more instructive about the "cultural divide" that divides us, it now appears, politically, as well as religiously, culturally, socially, even geographically.[2]

Two cultures (more or less)

We have long been accustomed to some of the religious peculiarities of American politics: most notably, the odd bedfellows of Catholics and Jews who have traditionally voted overwhelmingly for the Democratic party. We remember the famous quip by Milton Himmelfarb: Jews live like Episcopalians and vote like Puerto Ricans. That has been uncannily and precisely confirmed in the recent election, when 77 percent of Jews and 76 percent of Hispanic Catholics voted for Gore. But there have been significant changes even here. In spite of Lieberman's candidacy, the Jewish Democratic vote

[2] Report released by the Ethics and Public Policy Center (Washington D.C., 2001), based upon research conducted by John Green, et al., at the University of Akron.

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was lower than it had been in 1996. And non-Hispanic Catholics for the first time crossed the party line, 51 percent voting for Bush and 46 percent for Gore. (The *New York Times*'s report of 49 percent for Gore and 47 percent for Bush reflects the entire Catholic vote, including Hispanics.)

The more interesting statistics concern the divide—or "polarization," as the Ethics and Public Policy Center report puts it—within the religious denominations, for here religiosity, rather than religious ethnicity, so to speak, is the defining trait. Thus those who voted for Bush include 57 percent of "more observant" Catholics and 41 percent of "less observant"; 66 percent of more observant white mainline Protestants and 57 percent of less observant; 84 percent of more observant white evangelical Protestants and 55 percent of less observant; 88 percent of Mormons (almost all of whom are presumed to be more observant) and 35 percent of the nonreligious. Unfortunately, there is no breakdown for more and less observant Jews (or for Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform denominations). And black Protestants are a conspicuous exception, the 96 percent who voted for Gore obviously including a very large proportion of the more observant.

The cultural divide, signified by the "more" and "less" categories, was evident in exit polls that correlated votes with church attendance.[3] Bush won 63 percent of those attending services more than weekly, 57 percent weekly, 46 percent monthly, 42 percent seldom, and 32 percent never. Gore's numbers were in inverse order, starting with 36 percent more than weekly and ending with 61 percent never. It is also noteworthy that the "more" and "less" categories were more decisive in this election than in the previous one. Eighty-four percent of more observant white evangelical Protestants voted for Bush compared with 70 percent for Dole; 66 percent of more observant white mainline Protestants for Bush compared with 58 percent for Dole; and over 55 percent of less observant white evangelicals and mainline Protestants for Bush compared with the barely 50 percent (or even less, in some sur-

[3] The polls were conducted by the Voter News Service. Some of the results are summarized by Karlyn H. Bowman in a paper issued by the American Enterprise Institute, Washington D.C., January 2001.

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veys) for Dole. One might speculate that the Republican electorate was becoming more religious, but it is more probable that a religious electorate was simply responding to a candidate who was more overtly (and convincingly) religious, both in his policies and personal history, than either his predecessor or his opponent.

Remoralizing the republic

The Public Agenda survey, which examined not voting patterns but cultural beliefs and attitudes, confirms the ancient truth that issues of religion and morality are very nearly inseparable. This is not to reduce religion to morality or to equate the two. Spirituality, faith, redemption, ritual, and observance have an integrity and vitality in and of themselves, for both the communicant and the religious community. But there is also a moral dimension to religion that makes it a potent social and, as we now see, political force.

This explains some of the anomalies in this and other such studies. Although an overwhelming majority of Americans take a positive view of religion, less than a majority are seriously observant. Yet both the more and the less observant are not merely tolerant of religions other than their own; they take a positive view of those religions—not, obviously, because they agree with them doctrinally (or even know much about them), but because they think religion is a good thing, morally and socially, for the individual and for society. It was because many in the media did not understand this that the nomination of Lieberman caused them to raise the specter of anti-Semitism. In fact, the most ardent of evangelical Christians were delighted with his nomination, not because he is a Jew but precisely because he is a believing and practicing Jew.

For decades, Americans, religious and nonreligious alike, have been telling pollsters that the country is experiencing a "moral crisis," or, at the very least, a "major moral problem," reflected, they say, in a decline of civility, respect, responsibility, and family stability. A 1998 Gallup poll had 49 percent characterizing it as a crisis, another 41 percent a major problem, a grand total of 90 percent—this at a time when the economy was flourishing and crime and welfare had taken a precipitous drop. It is this sense of moral crisis or disarray

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that makes Americans, even nonobservant ones, so solicitous of religion.

Thus 70 percent want religion to have "a greater influence on American society," and 76 percent of these do not care which religion it is (only one in five believe it would be their own); 69 percent say that "more religion is the best way to strengthen family values and moral behavior"; 80 percent reject the view that "our society would do well even if many Americans were to abandon their religious faith." In fact, a good many Americans believe that we would all be better off if more of us became "deeply religious": 85 percent think that such parents would do a better job of raising their children, 79 percent that crime would decline, 69 percent that "greed and materialism" would decrease. About politicians, however, we are less confident; only 49 percent say that politicians would be more honest if they were more religious. (Evangelicals are more hopeful: 72 percent believe politicians would be more honest.)

Moreover, most Americans do not worry about the adverse effects of an increase in influence of those who are "deeply religious." Only 31 percent believe prejudice toward religious minorities would increase, 24 percent that women would lose some of their personal freedoms, and 31 percent that the "political system would be threatened." Here, too, Jews (2 percent of the population) and the nonreligious (7 percent) are conspicuous exceptions, being far less persuaded of the beneficent effects of religion and far more anxious about the deleterious effects. Fifty-four percent of Jews and 67 percent of the nonreligious think that more religion would result in more prejudice; and 49 percent of Jews and 56 percent of the nonreligious that the political system would be endangered.

Journalists, like Jews, are a distinct subset of the population (and perhaps academics are as well, although this survey has not singled them out). Yet even journalists, who (again like Jews) are most concerned about the separation of church and state and who are anxious about the threat to the polity (and who themselves are less religious than the majority of Americans), are not indifferent to the moral effects of religion. Seventy-six percent believe that if people were more

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religious, there would be less crime, 77 percent that there would be more civility, 79 percent that there would be more compassion. Seventy-three percent also think it "a bad idea for families to raise children without any religion."

How far toleration?

All such studies inevitably raise the issue of tolerance, although the concept is difficult to define, let alone to measure. One survey identifies it with a "middle ground," typified by the 53 percent who prefer a moment of silence rather than prayer in public schools (60 percent of Jews reject silence as well as prayer); the 56 percent who would give the same attention to the major Muslim holidays (if Muslims request it) as to Christmas (66 percent would extend the same privilege to Jews); the 70 percent who do not encourage their children to form friendships only with those of their own faith; the 58 percent who think it wrong to vote for a candidate merely because he is of one's own religion; and the nearly 60 percent who think it proper that elected officials who are themselves deeply religious "compromise" on such subjects as gay rights and abortion.

A more intriguing set of statistics on tolerance has 95 percent saying that they would vote for a black presidential candidate on their party's ticket, 92 percent for a Jew, 92 percent for a woman (or, presumably, a Jewish woman), and—here we find a precipitous decline of "tolerance"—59 percent for a homosexual, and 49 percent for an atheist. This array of figures is notable not only for the high level of tolerance accorded to those who have traditionally suffered prejudice on grounds of race, religion, and sex, but also for the conspicuously lower degree for those who might be thought undesirable for moral or social reasons. That atheists are at the very bottom of this ranking suggests, once again, the respect for religion as a moral arbiter and authority.

Another set of statistics is more perplexing. Although 69 percent believe that "more religion is the best way to strengthen family values and moral behavior," 58 percent in the same survey say that "it's not necessary to believe in God to be moral and have good values." At this point we may suspect that we are being given evidence not so much of tolerance as

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of the problematic nature of all polling statistics about attitudes and sentiments.

Pulpit booths

Tolerance is the sticking point in most surveys of this kind. Public Agenda's study, unlike some others, does not make the mistake of equating tolerance with indifference. On the contrary, it locates tolerance in the context of strong and pervasive beliefs—religious beliefs primarily, but also moral and cultural ones. It is these beliefs that lie behind the cultural divide that has been apparent in our society for some decades now and that has emerged so conspicuously in the latest election. Secularists once worried about those zealots, as they saw them, of the religious right who were introducing religion not only into society (the "public square") but into politics itself. It is now evident that it is not that small group but the American people themselves who, with a notable absence of zealotry, have acted upon their deepest beliefs—in the voting booths, of all places.

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The trouble with parties

MARC F. PLATTNER

THE presidential election of 2000 presented the United States and the world with a vivid lesson in the power of political partisanship and its potentially damaging effects. Through five long weeks of angry confrontations in the legislature, the courts, the media, and the streets, partisans on both sides disputed a whole series of issues related to the counting of the votes. Not only Republican and Democratic officials but also judges, columnists, academics, and ordinary Americans repeatedly sided with the positions taken by their favored presidential candidate. All claimed to be guided by the public interest, the law, or the principles of justice, yet on every point at issue, no matter how narrow or technical, they almost invariably espoused the view that favored their own party. Virtually no one publicly broke ranks on any matter. The division between the two sides could hardly have been more systematic or more pronounced.

There is, of course, a brighter side to this picture. None of the street protests turned violent, and there were no injuries,

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much less any deaths. No one seriously suggested that the dispute should be settled on any other basis than that provided by the Constitution. And when the U.S. Supreme Court issued its final ruling on the matter, it was universally if reluctantly accepted by the partisans of the losing side. Though partisanship exerted a powerful hold, its grip was clearly weaker than that of the Constitution.

Why did the broader public interest in maintaining the constitutional order and the rule of law prevail over partisan interests? Several reasons may be cited. First, America's now centuries-old and deeply rooted tradition of reverence for the Constitution posed a formidable obstacle to any resort to extraconstitutional measures. Second, the differences of principle or policy between the two parties, especially on the economic and foreign-policy issues where the president has the greatest influence, were remarkably modest. Third, the livelihoods of most Americans (except for a small number of people seeking political appointments in a new administration) were not likely to be immediately affected by the outcome of the presidential contest, and the prosperity that the country was enjoying diminished any inclination toward seriously disrupting the status quo. It would be folly, however, to expect such favorable conditions always to obtain in the United States, let alone in other democratic countries. These conditions are especially likely to be absent in newer democracies, whose political institutions inherently lack (in Madison's phrase) "that veneration which time bestows on everything, and without which perhaps the wisest and freest governments would not possess the requisite stability." In less well-entrenched democratic regimes, particularly in Latin America, it has not been uncommon for bitter party divisions to precipitate military coups or even to lead to civil war.

The decline of the political party?

But if too much partisanship can be fatal to democracy, the weakness of parties can also pose dangers. In a legislature with weak party attachments, it may prove impossible to pass needed legislation; the result, as in Yeltsin's Russia, is often to resort to presidential decrees or even the forcible disbanding of the legislature. Conversely, legislators may be easily

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wooed by a president through patronage or less savory means; in countries with weak parties like the Philippines and Korea, it has been common for presidents elected without a legislative majority to acquire one through massive party defections. Indeed, one of the areas in which the dozens of new democracies established in the past two decades have been least successful is the creation of strong and stable political parties committed to democracy. In part, this reflects the impossibility of "crafting" a party system—unlike most other key democratic political institutions, parties cannot be legislated into existence. At the same time, it reflects a global trend, as political parties seem to be increasingly enfeebled institutions in the more established democracies as well.

Almost everywhere, parties no longer command the loyalty or confidence they once did, and the number of independent voters and ticket-splitters has grown. In countries such as Italy, Canada, and Venezuela, highly organized and deeply rooted parties have virtually crumbled, giving rise to new and more fluid political patterns. Finally, political parties seem to be increasingly in disrepute, both reflecting and stimulating voters' suspicion of, and even contempt for, "the politicians" (or "the political class").

A large literature has grown up, especially in the United States, documenting and often lamenting the decline of political parties. Many political scientists have unfavorably compared America's fluid and diffuse parties with the more disciplined and "responsible" parties of Europe. In recent years, however, European parties have been showing signs of the same weakening of public support that has afflicted their American counterparts. As Susan Pharr, Robert Putnam, and Russell Dalton conclude from a review of data from most of the advanced democracies, "The collapse in citizen engagement with political parties [since the 1970s] ... is as close to a universal generalization as one can find in political science."

The weakening of political parties is a trend that extends well beyond the democratic world. Indeed, while democratic political parties may be growing weaker, they are also spreading to more and more places. By contrast, the "single" parties that not long ago ruled all the Communist countries and a large number of states in the Third World are becoming an

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endangered species. Today, there remain only a handful of countries ruled by Communist parties, and their future cannot be considered bright. Elsewhere as well, one-party regimes are in decline (except, perhaps, in the nonmonarchical countries of the Arab world). Last year alone, long-dominant parties that had manipulated elections to maintain their control lost power in Mexico (after 70 years), in Taiwan (after 50 years), and in Senegal (after 40 years). Moreover, a number of the remaining one-party states, including North Korea, Syria, and Iraq, seem to be undergoing a reversion to dynastic rule—a sure sign of the debility of the party as such.

There is something curious about the very notion of a single-party regime. It is relatively easy, perhaps, to understand de facto one-party rule, where a dominant party seeking to preserve a façade of democratic legitimacy permits the existence of genuine opposition parties but manipulates electoral outcomes. It is much harder to understand a de jure one-party state, where the special status of the ruling party is embedded in the constitution or the laws. Of course, nondemocratic ruling parties sometimes emerged out of opposition parties in parliamentary contexts. Still, why should a party that succeeds in gaining power and erecting a nondemocratic regime not rule directly through the government, but instead preserve a dual structure with the ruling party alongside (and usually above) the government? Probably this has something to do with the ideological character of the Leninist "vanguard" party that provided the model for subsequent totalitarian and authoritarian parties, but the rise and decline of the one-party state is a subject that needs separate treatment. For present purposes, it suffices to note that the Communist and fascist systems that so powerfully shaped the history of the last century exceeded even their democratic rivals in the centrality that they gave to party. Partly for this reason, the twentieth century is likely to be remembered as the age of the political party.

Even if we limit our analysis to democratic regimes, the recent weakening of political parties is a complex phenomenon, to which many factors have doubtless contributed. Some scholars even argue that what we are witnessing is not so much a decline of parties as a change in their role. In any case, there is a clear consensus among political scientists that

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political parties, whatever their difficulties and shortcomings, remain indispensable to the functioning of modern liberal democracy. As democracy has spread over the past quarter-century, competitive political parties have spread along with it, and despite all their ailments, their global reach today is wider than it has ever been. Apart from a few tiny island nations in the Pacific, there are no "really existing" democracies without parties. Certainly, no one has yet suggested a plausible and adequate substitute for the seemingly essential role that they play in structuring democratic politics in large modern societies. Today, then, the democratic political party is at once an indispensable and a deeply troubled institution, and its condition is likely to remain uncertain. Thus, even beyond the issues raised by America's 2000 presidential election, there are powerful reasons to engage in reflections of a fundamental kind on the nature of political parties and their place in a liberal democratic order.

The views of the philosophers

If one seeks to begin such reflections by turning to the tradition of political philosophy, one quickly discovers that, prior to the eighteenth century, little was said about parties except to condemn them. Of course, political parties in the sense that we now know them did not appear until the differentiation of Whigs and Tories in England in the latter part of the seventeenth century. Yet partisan divisions have always been a feature of politics, especially in republics. In the cities of the ancient world, the principal source of internal conflict was between oligarchic factions and democratic ones; as any reader of Thucydides will recall, such conflict not infrequently led to civil war and to one or both of the factions allying themselves with a foreign power. Thus it is hardly surprising that faction was regarded as a supreme political evil. It is true that ancient political thinkers from Aristotle to Polybius and Cicero developed the idea of the mixed regime, which combined both democratic and oligarchic elements with the aim of moderating internal conflict, but this approach did not envision anything like the institutionalization of political parties.

Nor did the early modern thinkers, even those whose ideas

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played a key role in the subsequent emergence of liberal democracy, have much to say about parties. Locke's *Two Treatises* are silent on the subject, and Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws* does not include them in its principal account of the English political order. When major political thinkers did begin to treat the subject, for the most part they continued to condemn parties. This is even true of the American Founding Fathers. The political system they designed was meant to allow for the interplay of conflicting interests, but not for their alignment into organized political parties. The presidency, in particular, was meant to be a nonpartisan office, and the original presidential selection system in the Constitution was adopted with this goal in mind. While one can argue that in most respects American political institutions have evolved within the broad outlines envisaged by the Framers, political parties remain a glaring exception.

The first major work of political theory wholly devoted to the subject of political parties was Lord Bolingbroke's *A Dissertation upon Parties,* published in 1733-34. Bolingbroke attacks "the spirit of party, which inspires animosity and breeds rancour; which hath so often destroyed our inward peace, weakened our national strength, and sullied our glory abroad." He thus calls upon good men to "join their efforts to heal our national divisions, and to change the narrow spirit of party into a diffusive spirit of public benevolence." While acknowledging that the emergence of the Whig and Tory parties under the reign of Charles II may have reflected real differences of principle, he argues that this division of parties should have been rendered obsolete by the settlement that followed the Glorious Revolution of 1688. At the same time, Bolingbroke pleads for the support of what he calls the Country party against the Court party, of "constitutionists" against "anticonstitutionists." The Country party, however, "must be authorized by the voice of the country. It must be formed on principles of common interest.... A party, thus constituted is improperly called a party. It is the nation, speaking and acting in the discourse and conduct of particular men." In effect, Bolingbroke, initiating a pattern followed by many subsequent authors and statesmen, calls for a party whose goal is to put an end to party divisions.

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The next major political philosopher to address systematically the issue of parties was David Hume, writing in the middle years of the eighteenth century. In his essay "Of Parties in General," Hume writes:

> As much as legislators and founders of states ought to be honoured and respected among men, as much ought the founders of sects and factions to be detested and hated; because the influence of faction is directly contrary to that of the laws. Factions subvert government, render laws impotent, and beget the fiercest animosities among men of the same nation, who ought to give mutual assistance and protection to each other. And what should render the founder of parties more odious is, the difficulty of extirpating these weeds, when once they have taken root in any state.

Yet in another essay entitled "Of the Parties of Great Britain," Hume notes that Britain's form of government is itself an almost unavoidable source of party divisions: "The just balance between the republican and monarchical part of our constitution is really, in itself, so extremely delicate and uncertain, that, when joined to men's passions and prejudices, it is impossible but different opinions must arise concerning it, even among persons of the best understanding." Therefore, he concludes, "however the nation may fluctuate between them, [Court and Country] parties themselves will always subsist, so long as we are governed by a limited monarchy." Hume opens still a third essay, entitled "Of the Coalition of Parties," by asserting, "To abolish all distinctions of party may not be practicable, perhaps not desirable, in a free government." The "only dangerous parties," he adds, are those based on disagreement on "the essentials of government," as this can lead to civil war. Thus Hume's verdict on parties seems to range from detestable to almost inevitable to perhaps even necessary (or at least better not abolished) in a free government.

The first major thinker to offer an unambiguous defense of party was Edmund Burke in his "Thoughts on the Present Discontents" (1770). In this essay, he specifically sets out to dispute the doctrine that "all political connections are in their nature factious, and as such ought to be dissipated and destroyed." Burke goes on to define party as an "honorable connection" aiming at the public good, rather than a faction ani-

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mated by seditious passions or venal private interests: "Party is a body of men united for promoting by their joint endeavors the national interest upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed." Against those who use "the cant of *Not men, but measures*" as an excuse to "get loose from every honorable engagement," Burke defends party loyalty:

> As the greater part of the measures which arise in the course of public business are related to, or dependent on, some great, leading, general principles in government, a man must be particularly unfortunate in the choice of his political company, if he does not agree with them at least nine times in ten. If he does not concur in these general principles upon which the party is founded ... he ought from the beginning to have chosen some other, more conformable to his opinions.

As Harvey Mansfield, Jr., has emphasized, Burke was the first to go beyond saying (as Hume had) that parties are inevitable or tolerable to say that they are respectable. Burke used his unparalleled eloquence to ennoble adherence to party as high-minded devotion to principle.

The emergence of parties in America

In his superb study of the origins of the party system in the United States, Richard Hofstadter, comparing the views of the American Founders with these British thinkers, finds clear counterparts to Bolingbroke and Hume, but none to Burke. The classic statement of opposition to parties is found in George Washington's "Farewell Address," in which he warns his fellow countrymen "in the most solemn manner" against the "spirit of party." According to Washington, the spirit of party

> serves always to distract the public councils and enfeeble the public administration. It agitates the community with ill-founded jealousies and false alarms, kindles the animosity of one part against another, foments occasionally riot and insurrection. It opens the door to foreign influence and corruption, which finds a facilitated access to the government itself through the channels of party passions.

Hofstadter identifies James Madison as an American counterpart to Hume in his belief that, while parties are evil, they are an inevitable accompaniment of political liberty, and there-

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fore must be checked and limited rather than eliminated. It is certainly true that Madison's famous argument in favor of the large republic in *Federalist* 10 is based on the contention that "the latent causes of faction are ... sown in the nature of man," and that faction cannot be abolished without abolishing liberty. Madison also accepts that "the spirit of party and faction" (he seems to use the two words more or less interchangeably) will be involved "in the necessary and ordinary operations of government." But Madison's proposed solution for solving the problem of faction in a free society does not call for permanent and well-formed political parties. Instead, drawing in part on the historical experience with religious sects, he calls for "extend[ing] the sphere" to "take in a greater variety of parties and interests." The idea is to foster a multiplicity of small and constantly shifting "parties" representing particular interest groups, rather than a few deeply rooted and well-organized national parties. As is clear from the records of the constitutional convention, and especially from the system of choosing a president adopted in the Constitution, none of the Founders intended the new political system to function on the basis of parties.

Yet during Washington's presidency, two competing national parties emerged who regarded themselves as divided over basic principles. The Republicans, led by Thomas Jefferson and Madison, viewed the pro-British Federalists as monarchists; the Federalists, led by Alexander Hamilton and John Adams and favored by Washington, viewed the pro-French Republicans as Jacobins. The dispute became so bitter that the Federalists tried to criminalize opposition through the Alien and Sedition Acts (1798). But in the elections of 1800, the Republicans won a resounding victory, even though the selection of Jefferson himself as president came only after a bitter deadlock in the House of Representatives.

As political scientist James Ceaser has pointed out, the emergence of party competition created a grave problem for the method of presidential selection included in the Constitution. On the presumption that the presidency would be a nonpartisan office with its occupant selected on the basis of personal merits, the Constitution gave each member of the electoral college two votes to be cast for two different candi-

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dates; it then stipulated that the candidate receiving the most votes (providing he received votes from a majority of electors) would be designated president, while the candidate with the second-highest number of votes would become vice president. In 1796, this system led to the election of a Federalist president (Adams) and a Republican vice president (Jefferson). The original constitutional language also provided that if two candidates won an equal number of electoral votes (and a majority of the electors), the House of Representatives would choose between them. This provision became relevant in 1800 when the Republican party caucus in Congress chose Jefferson and Aaron Burr as its candidates (with the clear understanding that Jefferson would be at the top of the ticket), but each of these men received 73 electoral votes. As a consequence, the decision between them was thrown into the House, voting by states. Many Federalists in the House supported Burr, leading to a protracted stalemate that was not broken until Hamilton's influence helped persuade a few Federalists to abstain, tilting a majority of the states to Jefferson. This tension between the reality of parties and the constitutional method of presidential selection led to the adoption in 1804 of the Twelfth Amendment, which directed future electors to cast separate votes for president and for vice president.

Despite the intensity of party competition between the Federalists and the Republicans, both sides continued to view party competition as undesirable. As Hofstadter puts it, "Each side hoped ... to eliminate party conflict by persuading and absorbing the more acceptable and 'innocent' members of the other; each side hoped to attach the stigma of foreign allegiance and disloyalty to the intractable leaders of the other, and to put them out of business as a party." Thus Jefferson's famous statement in his first inaugural address, "We are all republicans; we are all federalists," was intended not to legitimate the two parties but to pave the way for the absorption and disappearance of the Federalists as a distinct party.

In this the Republicans eventually succeeded, which led after the War of 1812 to the period of one-party dominance that became known as the "Era of Good Feelings." The Republican president during most of that period, James Monroe (1816-24), was a leading defender of the anti-party principle,

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at least in a purely republican government like that of the United States. While allowing that in a constitutional monarchy like England parties might legitimately attach themselves to either the king or the people, Monroe insisted that in the United States "there is but one order, that of the people," whose sovereignty is assured, thus leaving no need for partisan divisions. Monroe's successor as president, John Quincy Adams (1824-28), the first president of the century chosen without political party backing, was an equally vehement opponent of party, declaring in his inaugural address:

> Ten years of peace, at home and abroad, have assuaged the animosities of political contention and blended into harmony the most discordant elements of public opinion. There still remains one effort of magnanimity, one sacrifice of prejudice and passion, to be made by the individuals throughout the nation who have heretofore followed the standards of political parties. It is that of discarding every remnant of rancor against each other, of embracing as countrymen and friends, and of yielding to talent and virtue alone that confidence which in times of contention for principles was bestowed only upon those who bore the badge of party communion.

Parties great and small

But of course American politics did not long remain partyless. The man most responsible, both as thinker and politician, for the resuscitation and rehabilitation of party, and in that sense at least an American counterpart to Burke, was Martin Van Buren. A senator from New York who strongly opposed Monroe and Adams, Van Buren helped engineer the election of Andrew Jackson in 1828 and later himself succeeded Jackson as president in 1836. In his *Autobiography*, Van Buren wrote:

> Knowing ... that political parties are inseparable from free governments, and that in many and material respects they are highly useful to the country, I could never bring myself for party purposes to deprecate their existence. Doubtless excesses frequently attend them and produce many evils, but not so many as are prevented by the maintenance of their organization and vigilance. The disposition to abuse power, so deeply planted in the human heart, can by no other means be more effectually checked; and it has always therefore struck me as more honorable and manly and

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> more in harmony with the character of our People and of our Institutions to deal with the subject of Political Parties in a sincerer and wiser spirit—to recognize their necessity, to give them the credit they deserve, and to devote ourselves to improve and to elevate the principles and objects of our own and to support it ingenuously and faithfully.

Visiting the United States during the presidency of Jackson, Alexis de Tocqueville wrote of "the incessant agitation of parties," which he characterizes as "a necessary evil in free governments." Tocqueville distinguished, however, between "great" and "small" parties. The former belong to revolutionary epochs when great principles are at stake. Among these he includes the Federalist and Republican parties that competed in the early years of the American republic (though he also states that "both parties of the Americans were agreed on the most essential points"). These kinds of parties are "usually distinguished by nobler features" than those that prevail in more calm and settled epochs, "the times of small parties and intrigues."

Tocqueville is rather harsh in his evaluation of the latter: "Minor parties ... are generally deficient in political good faith. As they are not sustained or dignified by lofty purposes, they ostensibly display the selfishness of their character in their actions." Society is "agitated" and "degraded" by such parties, which "invariably disturb it to no good end." Moreover, Tocqueville adds, "To a stranger all the domestic controversies of the Americans at first appear to be incomprehensible or puerile, and he is at a loss whether to pity a people who take such arrant trifles in good earnest or to envy that happiness which enables a community to discuss them."

It is not hard to guess in which of these two categories Tocqueville would put our present-day parties. Although one might well quarrel with the sharpness of the dichotomy that he draws, it does highlight the central problem of political parties. If they reflect fundamental differences of principle, they threaten the unity and stability of the regime. Anyone who is committed to democracy would not want to encourage the emergence of disloyal or "anti-system" parties that seek to undermine the constitutional order. If, on the other hand, parties agree on essential political principles, their differences frequently will seem trifling, frivolous, or merely selfish, and

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their constant seeking of partisan advantage will appear to reflect a disregard for the larger public good. Clearly, there is a middle ground in which parties work best—when they remain in agreement over the basic elements of the regime but differ on other weighty matters that rise to the level of what Burke calls "great, leading, general principles in government." Today, American parties probably fall somewhere in between this middle ground and the "small parties" that Tocqueville disdains, but the narrowing of ideological differences that has characterized the post-Cold War era seems to be pushing them in the direction of the latter.

The institutionalization of parties

During the half-century following Tocqueville's visit to the United States, parties of the sort that Van Buren promoted and defended became a central institution of American political life. Writing in the 1880s, Lord Bryce devoted a major section of his classic work *The American Commonwealth* to describing "The Party System." "In America," he writes, "the great moving forces are the parties. The government counts for less than in Europe, the parties count for more; and the fewer have become their principles and the fainter their interest in those principles, the more perfect has become their organization." No account of American government can be adequate, Bryce insists, if it fails to go beyond the Constitution and the institutions it authorizes to consider "those extralegal groupings of men called political parties." For "party association and organization are to the organs of government almost what the motor nerves are to the muscles, sinews, and bones of the human body. They transmit the motive power, they determine the directions in which the organs act."

In many parts of the United States, as Bryce recounts, party organization (the "machine") had reached a high point of development, while the principles for which the parties stood were becoming ever murkier. It is this hypertrophy of party organizations that gave rise to the Progressive movement and its efforts to weaken the grip of the parties by enhancing both popular participation (through primary elections, referenda, and the like) and the role of neutral civil servants and experts. In a note added to the third edition (published in

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1910) of *The American Commonwealth*, Bryce notes that after 1890 the "sins of the machine, and the abuse of the system of nomination by primaries and conventions ... led to an effort to cure those abuses and to secure the ordinary citizen in his freedom of selecting candidates for office by bringing party nominations under the authority of the law and surrounding them with safeguards similar to those which surround elections." Thus most states enacted statutes regulating the time and manner of meetings for nominating party candidates for office and delegates for party conventions, and the new state of Oklahoma entered the Union with a constitution containing provisions governing primary elections. As a result, the selection of party nominees through primaries became a matter regulated by law, overseen by public election officials, and administered at public expense.

Bryce suggests that this approach will seem strange to Europeans, "whose habit of regarding party organization as a purely voluntary matter and parties as fluid and changing, not solid and permanent entities, makes them averse to any legal recognition of parties as concrete and authoritative bodies existing within the community." (At around this time, however, some Continental countries were beginning to go much farther than the Americans in officially putting parties at the center of the electoral process, adopting systems of proportional representation in which voters cast their ballots for party lists rather than individual candidates.) The "English mind," Bryce adds, might incline to think that "the voluntary and unfettered action" of good citizens should be sufficient to wrest control of the parties from the machines, so that "this recourse to state regulation and supervision might be dispensed with." But Bryce concludes that American parties are so much stronger and better organized than British ones that this alternative strategy would be "inapplicable to American conditions."

The Progressive impulse waned after World War I, leaving behind what has been characterized as a "mixed system" of party presidential nominations, in which some jurisdictions remained controlled by party regulars or "bosses," while others used more open procedures. But with the internal party reforms of the late 1960s and 1970s, the balance tilted in the direction of "openness," as primary voters wrested control of

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the nomination process almost entirely from the party regulars. The result has been lengthy candidate-centered primary campaigns, with the parties serving as vessels for the eventual nominee rather than as selectors. Another important change was effected by the campaign finance legislation of the 1970s, which gave parties a legal status that they had not previously enjoyed on the federal level and instituted public funding for presidential campaigns.

Parties, the state, and civil society

Parties seem to be necessary for democratic government to function effectively, but they also seem to be a perennial problem for democratic government—when they are too strong as well as when they are too weak. As the very word party indicates, parties represent part of the citizenry rather than the whole. They always claim, of course, in Burke's words, to be dedicated to "promoting by their joint endeavors the national interest upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed." But even if they do adhere to principle, the very fact that they constitute an organized *part*, but only a part, of the larger community renders their motives suspect. The loyalty that they require to function properly means that their members will often join in pursuing measures that more clearly benefit their party than their nation. Parties are inherently partisan, and hence they are inherently suspect—if no longer of disloyalty or subversion then of the narrow self-interest that leads to the kind of "partisan squabbling in Washington" today's American voters claim to deplore.

In the aftermath of the 2000 election, of course, the favored solution to the problem of partisan division is "bipartisanship." This term, so familiar and natural to American ears, is bound to seem a bit odd to the rest of the world. Most democratic countries, after all, have more than two parties that wield significant influence in political life. In any case, the notion of bipartisanship seems to presuppose the legitimacy of partisan division, but then to ask the two parties to overcome the partisanship that is their very raison d'être. Obviously, bipartisanship is necessary in situations of national emergency, and it may be useful and practicable with regard to particular issues where the parties are in agreement, but it

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hardly makes sense as an overall recipe for how parties should conduct themselves. On the level of principle, bipartisanship (as opposed to nonpartisanship) is logically incoherent. Of course, it is also utterly impractical, so there is not too much reason to worry about its damaging effects. One may be confident that each of the parties will continue to accuse its rival of acting in partisan fashion, while itself claiming to be guided by the public interest and the spirit of bipartisanship. Such is the nature of parties.

It is no doubt precisely because of their partisanship that parties, while appreciated by most political scientists and practitioners, are often viewed suspiciously by ordinary citizens. People may strongly support their own party, but they are much less likely to feel positive about parties as such, especially since they typically will have a low view of rival parties. In fact, in democracies around the world, political parties typically rank at or near the bottom in measures of citizen trust or confidence in institutions. Almost everywhere parties are in bad odor; idealistic young people today aspire to join "public interest" groups or other "civil society" organizations, not political parties.

For obvious reasons, the idea of political parties was especially discredited in the former Soviet sphere. The anti-Communist opposition in Eastern Europe revitalized the concept of civil society, understood as a united citizenry radically independent from an oppressive state. Some believed that this united civil society, which helped bring about the downfall of Communist regimes, could also become the basis of a new and more elevated democratic order. Very quickly, however, broad civil-society groupings like Solidarity in Poland and Civic Forum in the Czech Republic began to fragment. In practice, it turned out that democracy did not seem to be able to function without differentiated political parties. In other democratizing regions as well (especially Latin America), there is a growing recognition that civil society, for all its virtues, cannot provide a substitute for weak or corrupt political parties. But, of course, it is not easy for the international donors who have generously supported civil-society organizations to give grants directly to explicitly partisan institutions.

The anomalous character of political parties makes it difficult to locate them in terms of the distinction between the

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state and civil society. Although parties have proven to be essential political institutions in a democracy, they are not really part of government. Neither are they usually regarded as belonging to civil society. Some scholars even speak of parties as belonging to a separate realm of "political society," although it is not clear that this concept furthers our understanding. The fact remains that political parties exist somewhere in the interstices between civil society and the state and serve as a link between the two realms. To function successfully as conduits between citizens and their government, parties must reflect the sentiments of civil society, which inevitably change over time. Thus it is only natural for old parties to disappear and new ones to emerge (or for existing parties to be thoroughly transformed) as the composition of the population changes and new issues arise. The same is not true, at least not to the same extent, for governmental institutions proper, which are rooted in a largely unchanging constitutional order. In earlier eras political parties, as informal and extralegal institutions, were perhaps closer to the realm of civil society. But as they have increasingly become recognized in law, regulated in various ways, and even funded partly by the public treasury, they have been moving closer to the governmental side of the ledger.

Campaign finance reform?

The awkward "in-between" status of political parties is reflected in the problem of campaign and party financing, which is a burning issue—and an abundant source of scandal—in new and established democracies alike. Sometimes this problem is posed in terms of "too much money" being spent. Yet this concern seems to be misplaced, if one compares the level of political financing with the magnitude of the government resources that campaign victors control or the importance of parties and elections in a democracy—not to mention the amounts spent on, say, beer and pizza advertising. The real problem is the source of the funds and the ways in which this influences the conduct of public life.

It would be nice if parties could be funded largely by volunteer labor or membership dues, but today not even large nonpartisan civil-society organizations can be adequately funded

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in that way. People once were attracted to party service by the prospect of patronage, but such jobs have been sharply limited by civil-service reform. Large contributions from wealthy businesses and corporations carry obvious dangers. Soliciting voluntary contributions from small donors is a difficult business; policies offering tax breaks for such contributions have been adopted with little effect, though perhaps they have not yet been given an adequate trial.

Then, of course, there is the increasingly favored approach of direct public funding of parties and/or candidates, which may eliminate private influence but brings along a host of other difficulties connected precisely with the fact that parties are not properly government institutions. Thus public-funding legislation does not cite parties by name; it refers to parties that have won a certain percentage of the vote (or a certain proportion of seats in parliament) in past elections. But this necessarily benefits established parties, creates barriers to entry for new ones, and introduces a set of artificial benchmarks that powerfully influence the electoral process. Consider, for example, how the lure of public funding for parties achieving 5 percent of the presidential vote affected the Pat Buchanan and Ralph Nader campaigns in 2000. Political scientists Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair have attributed to public funding the emergence in Western Europe of what they call the "cartel" party: "No longer simple brokers between civil society and the state, the parties now become absorbed by the state."

This is hardly the place to launch into a detailed discussion of the complex issue of political finance reform. I merely wish to underline that any serious treatment of this issue must also be informed by an awareness of the larger problem of political parties. If we are to have political parties and campaigns, funds must be found to support them. But no adequate source of funding will be trouble-free. Parties are inherently problematic institutions, yet they have also proven to be indispensable to liberal democracy. We must not only learn to live with them but also to improve them and limit their inevitable defects, without crippling their ability to perform the tasks only they can do. Parties are the weak point of democracy, and its fate in the century ahead will depend in large part on theirs.

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Is technology a threat to liberal society?

IRVING KRISTOL

To say that I know nothing about science would be the understatement of the century. I was born and raised in Brooklyn, but unhappily, I didn't go to Brooklyn Poly. I went to City College instead. I don't know why, just a family tradition. It is true, I did start out as a physics major, but after one year of studying physics, I discovered that physics was very hard. So I decided to be an intellectual instead. In those days, one could spend four years in City College becoming an intellectual. It was very pleasant, because you didn't have to go to class. I suppose my function here today is to be a kind of kibitzer-intellectual. An intellec-

Editors' note: With this issue, The Public Interest *begins an occasional series of "readings"—reprints of articles, essays, and lectures that we believe are as pertinent today, if not more so, as when they first appeared. We begin with a talk given by Irving Kristol at the Polytechnic Institute of New York in 1975. It addresses the problems technology poses for liberal democracy—a subject that, given current developments in human genetics, merits serious consideration.*

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tual has been defined as a man with a great many opinions on a great many subjects about which he knows precious little. But he nevertheless fulfills a useful function—sometimes.

What I want to talk about today is the question of the place of science and technology in a liberal democracy in the decades ahead. I think that is not a matter about which one can be smug. I think we must anticipate some very serious problems involving the place of science and technology in our society. These are problems we are going to have to face up to, although they may not be problems we like to face.

Progress and perfection

There is a very interesting historical controversy concerning why the Greeks and the Chinese did not develop the technology that their theoretical science evidently made possible. There are different hypotheses for why this ocurred. The major one is the "institutional" one—namely, that there was slavery, or that labor was depreciated, not held in high esteem; and therefore, though pure science developed to a considerable degree in the ancient world, applied science and technology did not. There is another theory for why pure science developed while applied technology did not—namely, that the ancient Greeks and the Chinese were very wise people. They knew that although science is beautiful when contemplated in its theoretical aspects, when it is transformed into technology it becomes a form of power. And power is the power for good *and* for evil. The theory goes on to say that the ancients decided that this was not a power they cared to entrust men with, and therefore deliberately, systematically discouraged the application of pure theory to the development of technology.

This notion is preserved for us in our literature, in the myth of Doctor Faustus, for instance. The idea that there is something diabolical about science, the idea that the power that science gives you over the world is a power that comes not from God but from the devil—this idea was certainly very strong until around the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. At that point, we saw the emergence of the modern idea of science and technology, that not only is pure science good but the development of all the inherent potentialities of science

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and technology is also good.

For this change of perception and this change of perspective to take place, certain basic assumptions had to be changed as well. Two new grand intellectual ideas emerged to legitimate the modern scientific enterprise. One was that man could be trusted with this power, that man was not a creature of original sin, that man was not a creature of innate perversity—and that he was, if not perfectible in the literal sense, then perfectible enough to permit one to entrust to humanity the power that science, when converted into technology, gives us. The second basic idea that the Greeks did not have was that history was progressive, consisting of a series of stages whereby humanity perfected itself. Therefore, since the future would be better than the past and human beings in the future would be better than they had been in the past, there really was no great cause for concern in giving humanity this new and great power.

These two ideas, when conformed, give us the essence of what we call in our textbooks the Enlightenment—meaning that it's a good thing to get as much knowledge as possible and to make it as widely available as possible. Enlighten everyone, make knowledge freely available to all who seek it. This set of beliefs is the basis of our liberal democratic society.

Brave new worlds

During the past few decades, however, these assumptions have become less firmly held. It seems clear to me, at any rate, that these assumptions have become problematic, and will probably become more problematic in the years ahead.

I think the first great blow to the Enlightenment's view of the world, the modern view of the world, was the explosion of the atom bomb. It suddenly became very clear to us indeed that the power of science is a power for evil as well as for good. And not only for evil but for unlimited evil. Suddenly, humanity had within its grasp the power to destroy itself and the entire world quickly, without much effort. And the question was bound to occur to us: Is it unthinkable that humanity should do such a thing? Once we really looked at the world and thought about the matter, we came to the conclusion that

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no, it wasn't unthinkable. As a matter of fact, though we may have been slow in coming to that conclusion, our children were not. It's clear that the generation that came to maturity in the 1950s, after the explosions at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, saw the world rather differently from those of us who had the good luck, as it were, to be born and raised during the Depression.

The skepticism that then began to emerge about the necessary benefits of science and technology was reinforced by the upsurge of concern for ecology, the environmentalist movement. One must understand the environmentalist and the ecological movements in their full seriousness. These are not just movements for improving the world. These are movements that, in their full thrust, challenge the basic assumptions upon which modern civilization—modern, liberal, democratic civilization—was created. They question whether the furthest development of science and the richest, most ample application of technology necessarily are going to lead to a good society and a good world. And it is quite clear that, among young people today, there is a great deal of doubt and skepticism about this.

Oddly enough, throughout the twentieth century, even when the basic assumptions of our worldview and our society were not being explicitly challenged, there was one area of our culture where one could find it under very critical scrutiny. I trust that many of you read science fiction. One of the fascinating facts of our cultural history of the past 50 years is the the way in which science fiction, having begun on an optimistic note very early on—long before the hydrogen bomb—became extremely pessimistic. If you look at the worlds that are described in science-fiction stories of the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, you will find they are not usually the kinds of worlds that most of us would want to live in. They are not, to begin with, liberal; practically all of them are despotisms. Some are benevolent despotisms, some malevolent despotisms. But none of them is a self-governing community, and always for the same reason: Someone has to keep control of the knowledge that can destroy the entire civilization. And there is usually one group that has control of that knowledge: a good group, or a bad group. But what you do not have is anything like a

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liberal society, a self-governing political community of the kind that we have grown up in, where knowledge is free, where knowledge can be published freely, where knowledge can be circulated widely, and where it is assumed that all this will somehow lead to a good end result.

Now the premonitions of science fiction over the past 40 years have come home to roost in actuality in our lifetime. It really is a fact that in 30 or 40 or 50 years, these premonitions will be coping with a reality. It will happen that almost anyone with a smattering of college chemistry and physics will be able to create some form of atomic weapon. It's quite clear that, at the rate things are going, in 40 or 50 years almost anybody will be able to create explosives of a kind that can destroy an entire city. And if anyone can, it is possible to surmise that someone will, the world being what it is and human beings what they are. It is also quite clear that, given the tremendous developments in chemistry, some high school student puttering around in his basement is going to come up with a nerve gas that could decimate an entire country. Something like that will happen as science gets more and more sophisticated, as young people become masters of technologies that only a genius could dream of 50 years ago.

Educating the scientist

All of these things are on the horizon. I don't say this to scare you; I say this as a matter of fact. It is clear that this is going to happen. The real question is: How are we going to cope with it? Humanity has not perfected itself in any great degree as a result of the progress of science and technology in these past four centuries. It certainly has not perfected itself in its basic feelings of benevolence toward other human beings. And it is clear to me, therefore, that the basic premises of our liberal society are going to be under challenge and scrutiny. We're going to have to think about what we can do with the results of scientific enlightenment, with the results of the spread of scientific and technological knowledge as this knowledge becomes ever more powerful.

I hope we will approach this problem with the intention of preserving our liberal democratic society. But that is going to be extremely difficult. It will involve not the training of better

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technologists, but rather the moral education of scientists and technologists. And this may well turn out to be the biggest single challenge facing the scientific community—its own moral education, its own assumption of moral responsibility for the use and abuse of scientific knowledge. For this, you need an education not in science but in the humanities, because you don't get moral education by studying science. You may acquire good moral habits by studying science, but you don't get a moral education. You don't learn to think about problems of good and evil by studying science. That's what the humanities are for. And scientists, I believe, in the decades ahead, are going to have to become much more attentive than they have been to the humanities, in their own self-defense.

I think there is some loose thinking about this whole problem of scientists, engineers, and their social responsibilities. When scientists say they want to live up to their social responsibilities, what they usually mean is that they want more power than they have; it means they want to run things, to take charge. It's always nicer to run things than to be run by them. But that's not what moral responsibility really means. As a matter of fact I am not all that eager to see scientists get involved in politics per se. I think that with the possible exception of businessmen, engineers and scientists are the worst people I've seen working in politics. Businessmen are used to making decisions. They come to Washington and discover that you can spend 10 years in Washington and never have the privilege of making a decision; all you're doing is making compromises with other people who aren't making decisions either. It gets terribly frustrating for them, and they go home, back to a nice easy life where if you say "do something," somebody does it.

Scientists and engineers, on the other hand, have the inclination to think that the world is full of "problems" to which they should seek "solutions." But the world isn't full of problems; the world is full of other people. That's not a problem, that's a condition. Politics exist precisely because the world is full of other people. These other people have ideas, different ways of life, different preferences, and in the end, there is no "solution" to the existence of other people. All you can do is figure out a civilized accommodation with them.

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So I am not all that eager to see scientists become active in political affairs. I am, however, concerned to see engineers and scientists become interested in themselves—not in improving the rest of the world, but in facing the tasks of their own self-improvement, and learning how to think about their own responsibilities in a more serious and reflective way, rather than the traditional one: We can solve the problem, just give us the power to do it.

First things

One can't help but notice that the phrase "long-range planning" keeps coming up when scientists talk about politics. Scientists always love planning. The assumption underlying long-range planning is that people will do what you tell them to do. But in politics the problem with long-range planning is that unless you have absolute power over people, they don't do what you want them to do; they have their own inclinations. So what I think the scientific and engineering community has to face up to is its own self-education, its own social education. It has to start thinking about the problems of political philosphy—not political science, but political philosophy. Here I mean what is called in the academy "normative" political philosophy. I happen to think there is no other kind. It involves such questions as: What is a good society? How do you go about achieving it? How do you—what do we—learn from history? What do we learn from political philosophers of the past? I think that this kind of educational inquiry tends to be neglected in modern scientific education, as the fields proliferate and there is more and more to know.

I have no reason to doubt that the Polytechnic Institute will incorporate in its curriculum, and in its intentions, this humanistic intent. I'm assuming it will. It should. In my view, there isn't a scientific institution in the United States which is doing it right as yet, doing it seriously enough with a sense of the urgency involved. There are enormous decisions that will have to be made. And scientists, because they are the "experts," will be called in to say, for instance, do we clone, or don't we clone? Well, how do you decide whether to clone or not to clone? You cannot decide on the basis of science. You decide on the basis of philosophy, and especially on the basis

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of moral and political philosophy. Scientists need the whole area of self-education if they are going to cope with the world which science has brought about. And they will have a central role, I hope, in saving that world.

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Courtship today: the view from academia

DANIEL CERE

COURTSHIP charts pathways to marriage. Its customs and rituals help individuals negotiate the complex transition from sexual attraction, through love, to lasting marriage. It provides, for better or worse, the moral and emotional education for married life. And yet, courtship no longer occupies a vital place within contemporary American culture; the word itself now seems quaint and outdated. Social historians such as Beth Bailey and Ellen Rothman have documented the decay of courtship traditions in twentieth-century America. Leon Kass has pointed out that the erosion of courtship, coupled with other worrisome trends in law, economics, and technology, has destabilized the institution of marriage.[1] Today, the road to marriage is devoid of clear markers and fraught with more accidents and wrong turns.

The decline of courtship may reflect broader cultural trends. According to Anthony Giddens, one of Britain's most distin-

[1] "The End of Courtship," *The Public Interest*, Number 126, Winter 1997.

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guished sociologists, popular culture is creating a new grammar of intimacy. In *The Transformation of Intimacy* and, more recently, in the prestigious Reith Lectures, Giddens argues that we are moving from a marriage culture to a culture that celebrates the "pure relationship." A "pure relationship" is one that has been stripped of any goal beyond the intrinsic emotional, psychological, or sexual satisfaction it brings to the individuals involved. In this new world of "relationships," marriage is placed on a level playing field with all other long-term sexually intimate relationships, with similar values and processes governing their initiation, maintenance, and dissolution. Accordingly, the concept of a special pathway to marriage—i.e., courtship—tends to be abandoned in favor of a more general discussion of the dynamics of any close relationship.

However, as the consequences of family fragmentation have become more apparent, there are signs of a renewed interest in finding ways to strengthen marriage. A large body of research shows that healthy marriages protect the well-being of spouses and their children, and that a number of significant social costs are generated when marriages fail. This renewed appreciation for marriage's importance may be triggering some interest in the question of courtship. In the popular realm, a number of new books on courtship, both secular and religious, have sold well. Ellen Fein and Sherrie Schneider's popular 1996 book, *The Rules*, purports to teach battle-scarred women a practical, no-nonsense script for finding a fabulous husband. Joshua Harris's 1997 Christian best-seller, *I Kissed Dating Good-Bye*, urges young people to eschew recreational dating and return to older "scriptural" courtship practices. And Leon Kass and Amy Kass's well-received anthology of readings on courtship and marriage, *Wing to Wing, Oar to Oar*, offers readers wisdom on the nature of courtship and marriage culled from 5,000 years of the Western tradition. The success of these books indicates a yearning among many young people for clearer and more effective pathways to marriage than the culture now provides. The spread of marriage education, in both schools and religious communities, also suggests that the case for courtship is not completely closed.

But what does contemporary scholarship have to say about the courtship question? According to Norval Glenn, the dean

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of American family sociologists, the study of courtship is now "virtually moribund." Academics do not appear particularly interested in discussing pathways to marriage. There are, however, a number of scholarly theories poking around into topics of related interest: heterosexual attraction, mate selection, pair bonding, and close relationships. Three schools of scholarly thought merit attention: exchange theory, sociobiology, and close-relationship theory. While these approaches contribute little to the study of courtship itself, they do provide fascinating articulations of the dominant ideologies guiding today's discourse on heterosexual pair bonding.

The commodification of courtship

The contemporary cultural disarray over dating, courtship, and mate selection reflects deep-seated historical developments that have been the subject of scholarly discussion for a few generations. The transition to modernity and then to postmodernity was accompanied by a diminishment of social scripting of interpersonal relationships, including sexual relationships, courtship, and marriage. Over 60 years ago, one of America's eminent sociologists, Willard Waller, drew attention to the modern shift away from the explicit standards for mate selection that characterized more homogeneous societies. The nature of the "bargaining process" for heterosexual pair bonding was becoming "confused" and "complex." Waller argued that the modern emphasis on "marriage for love" was little more than a mask for our cultural confusion over the absence of more explicit communal guidelines toward marriage.

Waller noted that new types of bargains were being struck in the courtship process, "bargains which have to do with merely the conditions of association outside of marriage." Over the course of the twentieth century, dating and courtship patterns gradually drifted into free-floating social space, devoid of any meaningful connection to the goal of marriage. Rising rates of premarital sexuality, cohabitation, and out-of-wedlock births since the 1960s signaled a decline in the cultural and social stature of marriage as the unique repository of sexual life and childbearing. These trends eroded the traditional connection of courtship to marriage.

Critical social theorists such as Eva Illouz in *Consuming*

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the Romantic Utopia and Beth Bailey in *From Front Porch to Back Seat* have attempted to trace one important aspect of this story, namely, the commodification and commercialization of courtship practices in modern capitalist economies. They argue that nineteenth-century courtship practices lay within the sphere of civil society: Churches, families, kinship groups, and cultural communities largely shaped courtship rites and practices. However, twentieth-century courtship increasingly moved to the beat of modern capitalism. Courtship was driven out of the home and into the marketplace: Movie theaters, automobiles, restaurants, dance halls, and clubs, rather than homes, church halls, and community celebrations, became the privileged spaces for courtship activity. According to Bailey, the language of the market came to dominate academic theories of courtship and romance, as well as popular culture:

> As it emerged in the twentieth century, courtship largely was construed and understood in models and metaphors of modern industrial capitalism. The new system of courtship privileged competition (and worried about how to control it); it valued consumption; it presented an economic model of scarcity and abundance as a guide to personal affairs. The rules of the market were consciously applied; the vocabulary of economic exchange defined acts of courtship.

But a systematic application of economic theory to courtship had to await the work of economist Gary Becker. It was Becker and his school's special, but limited, achievement to apply the tools of the economist to the arena of love, and to do so, moreover, at the very moment in history when the commodification of courtship was largely completed. Exchange theory explicitly assumes that acts of marriage, like other acts, are the choices of rational selves. "Persons marry," Becker wrote in his 1974 essay "A Theory of Marriage," "when the utility expected from the marriage exceeds the utility expected from remaining single." In the self-contained world of exchange theory, any desire, even the desire to love and care for another human being, must be shoved within the cramped confines of a person's "utility function."

Exchange theory views the passion and poetry of mate selection as mere marketing strategies. The utility of a marriage depends on the "commodities" produced by the potential part-

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ner: standards of living, quantity and quality of children, sexual gratification, social status, and others. The marriage market consists of three critical components: supply, preferences, and resources. Men and women actively looking for a spouse represent the "supply." "Preferences" are the characteristics men or women, as customers, look for in a spouse. "Resources" are the various attributes that men and women offer in order to gain those preferences.

This "exchange theory" model of courtship, the oldest of our three expert stories, is by no means dead. The "marriage market" model, with all its bland economic vocabulary (supply and demand, preferences, bargaining, exchange, and investment), continues to influence some prominent discussions of mate selection—and still generates research into such areas as the relationship between employment and the marriageability of men.

For those interested in marriage as a social institution, the advantage of this perspective is that it still views courtship as the pathway to marriage. But in exchange theory, the marriage vow has been dumbed down to a mere contract intended to serve the narrow interests of the individuals investing in the relationship. No-fault divorce laws make marriage agreements far flimsier and more vulnerable to shifting preferences than most business contracts. Exchange theory nicely reflects this cultural shift and spotlights the increasingly utilitarian motivations that guide entrance into these fragile marriage "deals."

Yet by assuming that, by definition, individuals act as rational consumers, "exchange theory" is of limited use in understanding the social and interpersonal aspects of courtship and marriage as institutions. It fails to appreciate the irrational or unselfconscious ideas that may move people to marriage and may keep them in it long after a "rational consumer" would have traded in their old clunky model for a jazzier new one. Many of the essential features of love—the longing for permanence, the desire to give oneself to another—must in the economists' story of courtship be either submerged into "contract theory" or dismissed altogether as irrational. For a full understanding of how and why people marry, we must look elsewhere.

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It's all in the genes

Sociobiology is one of the most popular of the new theoretical perspectives on courtship, marriage, and sexuality. In the quest to unravel the convoluted scripts of heterosexual bonding, sociobiology has emerged as an attractive alternative, basing arguments on an appeal to genes rather than morals. In contrast to rational choice or exchange theories of courtship, sociobiologists search for deeply rooted evolutionary factors that govern sexual and romantic preferences in mate selection.

Evolutionary psychology maintains that males and females have radically divergent sexual psychologies. Innate evolutionary factors have conditioned women to value and select men on the basis of their ability to provide nourishment, protection, security, and social status for themselves and their offspring. Females seek "dominant males." Status signals such as power, money, social position, intelligence, education, skills, and the ability to father rank high for women. Males, on the other hand, are "hardwired" to seek sexual liaisons with women who show signs of reproductive viability, such as health, youth, and physical attractiveness.

In this highly charged and competitive world of courtship, male and female interests are essentially incommensurable, yielding divergent strategies and counter-strategies of seduction. Females deceive about their age and physical attractiveness; males dissemble about their financial resources, career prospects, and willingness to commit. Women deceive and seduce cosmetically, men deceive and seduce through ritualized displays of acquisition. Women concentrate on dressing for dates, men concentrate on planning and paying for dates.

Given these courtship dynamics, sociobiology predicts the emergence of a "marriage gradient" with women "marrying up" and men "marrying down." This puts a "marriage squeeze" on high-status women. High-status males have an immense pool of potential female mates from which to choose, but high-status women seeking to "marry up" face a very restricted pool of available males. The male tendency to "marry down" tends further to sideline high-status females. Feminists often disparage this pattern as a patriarchal strategy aimed at female subordination: Men socially entrench the subordination of women by marrying down and ruling over their younger

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and lower-status women. This male strategy also contributes to the social marginalization of high-achieving women.

Sociobiologists smile at these expressions of moral outrage. From their perspective, feminists are usually high-status women with careers, resources, and power; however, feminists predictably refuse to "marry down." They are in the market for "challenging" men—a feminist euphemism for "dominant males." In his 1998 book *What Women Want, What Men Want*, John Townsend notes that the feminist disparagement of "marrying-down" males echoes the age-old rhetorical strategies of high-status females, who typically denigrate low-status female competitors while simultaneously berating high-status males for daring to overlook them.

These courtship strategies have a profound impact on hierarchical structuring of human societies. Male and female mate preferences generate very different social outcomes. The traits that men value (female youth, health, and attractiveness) have relatively little impact on social order, aside from the impetus they give to the development of cosmetic and clothing industries. But the traits that women value—status, productivity, dominance, resources—fire up the male "will to power." Men need to make a difference in the world if they are to be noticed by women. Mary Batten, author of *Sexual Strategies: How Females Choose Their Mates*, argues that female mating strategies play a major role in driving men to compete for power and wealth, thereby fostering in all human societies the "social dominance orientation" of men.

Sociobiology offers a rollicking comic spoof on the world of romance and power. In the world of sociobiology, lovers are bustling about, stumbling through their relationships, deceiving one another, wooing and warring with one another from very different, even contradictory, scripts of love—and yet, somehow, when all is said and done, these mismatched lovers land in bed together, men on top, cunningly trapped by the inexorable logic of reproductive success. Meanwhile, in the public sphere, men exhaust themselves to succeed in the worlds of high finance and global politics in order to be "attractive" to the next pretty blond that happens to pass by. In the words of Henry Kissinger: "Without an office, you have no power, and I love power because it attracts women."

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Sociobiology also offers an intellectual spin on the growing climate of cynicism that pervades contemporary explorations of marriage in literature, popular film, and music. According to David Buss in *The Evolution of Desire*, we must "lift our collective heads" out of the romantic sands and recognize that heterosexual relationships are about power, sex, property, deceit, and control, rather than love, self-giving, romance, and commitment. Sociobiology replaces the tale of Cupid's arrows with a story of another outside agent: our own impish genes, which manipulate us and mock our purposes in their blind, relentless search for survival and replication.

Power males

Some scholars believe that sociobiology offers scientific support for monogamous marriage. Townsend's colorful exploration of evolutionary perspectives on mate selection ends with a homiletic flourish on the role evolution played in the development of the stable monogamous marriage. Yet if we follow the logic of maximum reproductive success to its endpoint, we seem to find a case made for male polygyny, not monogamy. To the extent that sociobiology suggests or implies a particular social-sexual order, dominant male polygyny, not strict monogamy, may eventually emerge as its central plank.

Townsend himself has trouble shaking loose from the inner logic of this position. "Men in position of power," he admits, "tend to practice polygyny: legitimate polygyny where it is allowed; functional polygyny where it is not." Townsend notes that polygyny is accepted in over 83 percent of human societies. He concedes that Western societies have firmly prohibited polygyny but argues that many elite males are "in effect, polygynous." Divorce and remarriage or a series of sexual partners are forms of "serial polygyny." The illicit sexual relationships that garnish the lives of many high-status males are forms of "functional polygyny." As sociobiology cleans the dust from our evolutionary psychology, out springs an aggressive and promiscuous male genie.

And today, male elites command resources, technologies, and services far beyond the wildest dreams of their predecessors. They are able to sustain relationships with a variety of women, as well as make significant investments in their off-

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spring. Indeed, we may be in the midst of a subtle and imperceptible drift toward some form of socially acceptable concubinage for dominant males. Sociobiology might accelerate this trend by making the concept of polygyny appear to be a reasonable accommodation to some of the more problematic exigencies of dominant male psychology.

Sociobiology does bring one crucial advantage to current debates. It reconnects courtship with procreation, offering a powerful exploration of the intrinsic connections between sexuality, heterosexual bonding, reproductive success, and investment in offspring. And it provides a corrective to other theoretical approaches, which tend to separate the question of children and child-rearing from courtship and mate selection. However, it is important to note that according to sociobiology, sexual attraction per se is not dependent on conscious awareness of the linkage between attraction and procreation. This linkage was forged in our distant evolutionary past. Once the evolutionary hardwiring is in place, men are instinctively attracted to young voluptuous women, and women are instinctively attracted to dominant males. They are not attracted *because* physical beauty or social dominance signal reproductive potential; they are just attracted.

But what happens when these ancient evolutionary drives are loosened from their moorings in reproduction? What happens when, aided by technology, we can weaken or dissolve altogether the linkage between sex and procreation? Sociobiologists assure us that our drives are now genetically secure enough to dispense with any direct concern with procreation. In days of old, procreation *was* a critical fact in the slow evolutionary hardwiring of heterosexual attraction, but that work is done. The dynamics of heterosexual attraction can now thrive in freestanding forms. So where, in the final sociobiological analysis, do children fit in? In social terms, nowhere.

In sum, for all of its explanatory power regarding the interactions among sexual desire, procreation, and social processes, sociobiology is unable to understand or strengthen marriage as an institution. In the current environment, sociobiology also reinforces trends of dubious value. Its particular version of sexual realism corresponds well to contemporary cynicism about

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heterosexual love and marriage. Sociobiology has a very modest interest in marriage; if other arrangements can meet our "evolutionary desires," sociobiology is more than willing to consider them. There is also its barely veiled celebration of dominance, exploitation, and raw power. Insofar as sociobiology helps shape our standards, it supports efforts to give dominant males more latitude to make full use of their resources in the realm of sexual pursuit. Finally, sociobiology has a nice way of acknowledging children for their unique contribution to the evolution of our sexual drives, then politely showing them the door.

Postmodern courtship

One of the most prominent perspectives in contemporary courtship research is that of "close-relationships" theory. In 1988, Steve Duck edited a major anthology, *Handbook of Personal Relations,* which marked the tenth anniversary of a new discipline, "the science of close relationships." Current research in the field continues at the "incredible rate" of expansion that Duck celebrated in 1988. This work has been spearheaded by a diverse group of scholars who have formed professional associations, such as the International Society for the Study of Personal Relationships and the International Network on Personal Relationships. They have also launched two journals, the *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* and *Personal Relationships,* as well as a number of major publication series, such as the *Sage Series on Close Relationships* and *Advances in Personal Relationships.* The field employs a variety of research methodologies, from standard social-science surveys to intensive one-on-one and small-group interviews.

The dynamics of initiating and developing close, sexually based relationships are a major preoccupation of close-relationship theory. Articles and monographs cover a very wide range of topics: "falling in love," romantic love, attachment patterns, "love styles," interracial and interethnic dating, physical attractiveness (body shape, health status, hair length, height, voice intonation), age preferences, jealousy, love triangles, dating infidelity, fatal attractions, family-of-origin influences, socioeconomic status, self-disclosure processes, topic avoidance, deceit, nonverbal signals, the use of humor, coping with peer

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and parental criticism, relationship dissolution, and romance grieving processes.

This complex body of theories probing a baffling array of topics might appear to resist general commentary and review, but certain common themes do emerge: Marriage is knocked off its pedestal, and its purpose of child-rearing gets short shrift. And the transcendent ideal of love is replaced by the "love styles" of individual selves seeking sexual satisfaction in episodic relationships. Courtship, rather than leading to marriage, becomes just one damn relationship after another.

Generic brand relationships

Close-relationship theorists argue that we need to bring a common theoretical and methodological approach to the study of all "sexually based primary relationships." In their 1989 book *The Sexual Bond: Rethinking Families and Close Relationships,* John Scanzoni, Jay Teachman, and Linda Thompson argue that alternative sexual life styles are not "qualitatively other from what is known as the benchmark conventional nuclear family." Courtship, spousal, and familial relationships can and should be "subsumed under the broader construct of close or *primary* relationships."

In the taxonomy of sexually based adult relationships, the existence or nonexistence of a legally recognized bond, such as marriage, is a secondary consideration. Marriage is merely a de jure category, not an actual scientific reality. Close-relationship theorists argue that the family is "essentially a lay or commonsense construct" rather than a meaningful scientific model. The terms "family" and "families" are "valid poetic and literary descriptions of folk-culture reality" that may be of value in "fostering communication among *lay persons*" about the "slippery realities" of personal relationships. However, such "lay" constructs distort and limit scientific work on intimate adult relationships. Scholars and professionals will "find it more fruitful both practically and scientifically to think and work in more general or generic terms—specifically in terms of *close* or *primary* relationships."

A close relationship is "dyadic." It is an "interaction" between two individuals that is characterized by strong and coherent patterns of interdependence, self-disclosure, exchange,

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investment, commitment, and conflict. These dyadic bonds constitute an interpersonal microcosm with their own unique processes and dynamics. One side-effect of redefining all relationships as inherently dyadic is that it obscures the communal side of marriage. The family itself fades away as a unit of analysis. For close-relationship theorists, the only way to understand the family is to break it down into bidirectional dyadic pairs: husband-wife, mother-child, father-child, or brother-sister relationships.

In *The Sexual Bond: Rethinking Families and Close Relationships*, Scanzoni, Teachman, Thompson, and Karen Polonko suggest that legal theorists should consider expanding their thinking about sexually bonded intimacy beyond the confines of the family to include all "close relationships." The American Law Institute recently proposed model legislation that does just that, offering most cohabiting partners with children many of the legal rights heretofore reserved for married couples. The Canadian Bar Association recently published a lengthy report, *Recognizing and Supporting Close Personal Relationships Between Adults*, which advocates fundamental reforms of Canadian laws in the light of close-relationship theory. It argues that the law must now stress the "substance of relationships" rather than favoring certain types of "arrangements" such as marriage. Any relationship marked by interdependence, mutuality, intimacy, and endurance merits legal recognition. The report contends that governments "should recognize and support" all significant adult close relationships so long as they are "neither dysfunctional nor harmful."

If marriage and family fade from view, so too do children. Close-relationship theorists tend to ignore the procreative dimension of sexual relationships. This child-free understanding of courtship also shapes, and often distorts, these theorists' view of social reality. One would assume, for example, that our society's high rates of teen pregnancy and unwed childbearing would be relevant to the study of contemporary heterosexual courtship. Yet these trends receive scant attention in close-relationship theory. Its narrow concentration on the interpersonal dynamics of dyadic relationships precludes any serious consideration of the procreative dimension of heterosexual coupling.

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Yet children do happen, and their arrival does, therefore, present a theoretical quandary. Close-relationship theorists respond to this problem by drawing attention to the vexing impact of children on adult close relationships. For example, Steve Duck encourages us to abandon the traditional view of children as "bundles of joy," and instead to understand them as "one of the greatest stressors of a relationship." According to Duck, the transition to parenthood is "hazardous to marriage," since it is typically accompanied by sharp declines in relationship satisfaction. In a popular rendition of close-relationship theory, *Partnering: A New Kind of Relationship*, Hal and Sidra Stone devote two chapters to the exploration of obstacles to satisfactory dyadic relationships. One chapter surveys a variety of potential threats to relationships, such as drug addiction and alcohol abuse; the other chapter focuses entirely on children. The Stones argue that children pose the major threat to "primary relationships" between adults, since these relationships are "very frequently ... destroyed by the presence of children."

Love under construction

In close-relationship theory, relationships have no teleology or common goal: not marriage, certainly, not even love. In this view, love has no objective existence; it is a construct of the individual, a shifting metric by which each of us defines whether or not relationships are "good enough" to continue. Constructivism challenges the old "love and marriage, horse and carriage" view. It notes that some of the most exquisite forms of romantic love, such as the courtly love tradition of the medieval era, stood outside of conjugal and familial life, and concludes that intimate dyadic love can flourish in many freestanding forms.

The "love researchers" of close-relationship theory attempt to provide tools for measuring how people construct and conceptualize love. This project turns our attention away from any substantive exploration of "real love" or "true love" (the phrases themselves seem so quaint) to a consideration of "how" love is "constructed" or "represented" by diverse individuals or communities. Constructivism seems to be our emerging cultural conclusion on the meaning of love.

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In *The Psychology of Love*, John Alan Lee puts forward one of the most thoroughly constructivistic views of love in close-relationship theory. Lee states that he is "not concerned with defining love itself" but with helping lovers distinguish between different love constructs. These "love styles" represent "competing ideologies of love" that Lee culled from an extensive study of Western literature and philosophy. His "constructive typology" consists of six types of love, which, he cautions his readers, are far from exhaustive. *Eros* is passionate love. Erotic lovers seek intimate sexual and emotional involvement. *Ludus* is flirtatious; love is a game. Ludus lovers avoid commitment or self-disclosure. *Storge* is companionate love or friendship. *Mania* is an obsessive love that is intense, explosive, jealous, and possessive. *Agape* is an altruistic and self-giving love based more on will than emotion. *Pragma* is a utilitarian love concerned with a sensible match that will effectively meet the social and emotion needs of each partner.

The key word is "style." There are "love styles" just as there are "life styles." The differences between lovers consist only of different "styles" of loving, "each valid according to each person's taste." In this view, love styles can be constantly adjusted and changed, since they are grounded in no external or objective standards but instead in the subjective satisfactions of the "customers." One might find a particular love style (or love-styler) "dissatisfying," so, John Lee asks, "why not change?"

The value of various constructed styles of love is pegged to levels of subjective satisfaction. Yet there is considerable debate over the standards for measuring satisfaction. Is it a matter of the partners' subjective feelings about their relationship (how the relationship feels)? Or is it about their actual relationship behavior (how it works)? In their contribution to the volume *Satisfaction in Close Relationships*, Susan and Clyde Hendricks distance themselves from attempts to offer more objective criteria of relationship success. They maintain that close-relationship theory is "fixed on people's subjective, affective experiencing of their own happiness and contentment with their close relationship."

The essay by Larry Erbert and Steve Duck in the same volume insists on the importance of "subjective evaluation by

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each relational partner": "Satisfaction measures are not designed as objective assessments of relational interaction, but as measures of the attitudes and feelings of the relational partners." The authors argue for a "dialectical theory of relationship satisfaction" that challenges and deconstructs the "ideal type" implicit in most measures of satisfaction. They contend that these measurements conceal an ideological bias favoring stability over change, reliability over uncertainty, togetherness over individuality, and agreement over conflict. These valuations also entrench "a rigid structural prison that serves to limit the validation of other types of relationships." By instead emphasizing subjective feelings and dispositions, these theorists hope to validate more fluid and variable relationships.

All about me

And how are we to understand the "self" that close relationships are intended to serve, satisfy, and enhance? Julia Wood and Steve Duck insist that we can no longer view the "identity" of the self as "enclosed in a stable core." Instead, "selves are recognized as contingent, forming and reforming within diverse relationships and circumstances." The self only assumes identity "in response to others." According to Kenneth Gergen and Regina Walter, relationships are the "ontological prior," by which they mean that "the individual is essentially an extension of relationship." Thus the grounding of identity in our society, once secured by morality and religion, has shrunk down to the small circles of shifting close relationships in which selves seek recognition and meaning through intimacies with "significant others."

For Gergen, the modern "saturated self" is essentially a "pastiche personality" that is continually constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed in diverse social contexts. Since the self is constantly "fashioned" and then refashioned within processes of social interchange, the individual does not have an "autobiography" in which, for example, courtship may represent one chapter in a coherent life story. Instead, we now have "sociobiographies," in which diverse relationships constantly help to construct, deconstruct, and reconstruct personal identity. For Julia Wood and Steve Duck, this "relational self" is a "teeming mass of potentialities, any of which

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may be realized in particular moments and none of which is invariant over time and context."

In this view, close relationships are significant only insofar as they generate worlds of meaning that enrich and enhance the self. Close-relationship theorists develop models to chart the "self-enhancement" component in close relationships, and argue that these relationships are "one especially satisfying, useful, and human means of expanding the self through including each other in the self." Close-relationship advocates Elaine and Arthur Aron cite the ancient Upanisadic axiom that "all love is directed toward the Self." Even in loving, the self is still profoundly self-referential.

Microwave relationships

In close-relationship theory, romantic relationships are said to constitute the "formation stage" of sexually based relationships. For these theorists, courtship does not point toward a specific end, such as stable, successful marriage. The intense, fluid, exploratory world of courtship-as-romance—not courtship leading to marriage—is the paradigm for *all* sexually intimate relationships, including marriage.

And so marriage lands finally in a very curious spot. Instead of courtship being defined by the goal of marriage, marriage is defined by the dynamics of courtship. Close-relationship theory agrees with the old cosmetics advertisement slogan: The test of a good marriage is its capacity to maintain the "thrill of courtship." The phrase "You would never know they are married" becomes the highest praise for conjugal love. Of course, intense courtship cannot be sustained forever. But it may be precisely the necessarily limited duration of courtship that makes this bond so fascinating to close-relationship theorists. Close-relationship theory tends to focus particularly on "initiation" and "disengagement," since these are "particularly striking phases" of intimate relationships. It tends to pass over the dreary world of "relationship maintenance" (marriage).

The relational self is supremely adapted to an endless ebb and flow of romantic encounters and liaisons. In the postmodern world, "Purpose is replaced with *pastiche*." Relationships are *pastiche*, marriage is purpose. Gergen and Walter exclaim the wonders of intense, but fragile, romances. These

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passionate liaisons are "joint creations" that offer accelerating, mutually generated forms of "reverberating activity"—"my pleasure increases as I experience your pleasure, yours increasing as a result of mine, mine increasing further because of yours, and so on."

Gergen argues that courtship now refers to an ongoing process that involves the formation of many different sexually bonded relationships throughout life. He defines these interactions as "microwave relationships"—cooked up fast, served, and consumed. The layers of emotional residue left by the multiple passages through episodic relationships are not lamented but celebrated: "The pace of relationships is hurried, and processes of unfolding that once required months or years may be accomplished in days or weeks ... The single person may experience not a handful of courtship relationships in a life time but dozens."

In this postmodern world, stability, domesticity, and fidelity evoke little interest. Relational life is episodic, consisting of closures of old relationships to make way for self-disclosing new intimacies.

Flat and dull

A research model primarily aimed at understanding the internal dynamics of close, sexually intimate relationships is obviously ill-equipped to understand marriage or what leads to marriage. Yet times change. The new world imagined by close-relationship theory—essentially a world of serial coupling—is, more and more with each passing day, the world in which we live. Close-relationship theory is thus an articulation of an increasingly popular, and perhaps soon dominant, ideology of personal relationships.

In *Couples: Scenes from the Inside*, Sally Cline argues that we are in the midst of a "relationship revolution." In this new world, five ideas stand out. First, the distinction between marriage and other intimate partnerships is all but eliminated. Courting couples are now said simply to be "in a relationship," which puts them in the same generic category as married couples, subject to the same norms and processes of relationship quality, maintenance, and dissolution. Second, while the need for basic human attachment and intimacy must still

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be satisfied, we now privately choose the specific "love styles" with which we gratify those needs. Third, the new world is only big enough for the dyad, the couple. Children are essentially screened out. Despite complaints about the narrowness of the old nuclear family, the world of "close relationships" is far narrower, and also far more boring. Fourth, the new dyadic relationships are measured not by their capacity to foster traditional virtues such as courage or self-sacrifice, but solely by their capacity to satisfy what the self views as its needs. All externally based criteria for what is needed, or for what might constitute satisfaction, are banished; all standards become radically subjective. Finally, the openness, emotional intensity, and relative brevity of courtship are the very traits that make it superior to marriage as an expression of, and as a way of understanding, relationships. Consequently, romantic relationships replace marriage as life's main arena for the discovery of personal meaning.

In the end, close-relationship theory reduces courtship and marriage to the loving interactions of ever-changing dyad partners. This shift may be the soft underbelly of contemporary theory and practice. For when the dust of this revolution settles, only "relationships" remain—thin and shadowy vestiges of formerly powerful vocations. Despite postmodern celebrations of uncertain futures and new-found freedoms, the road ahead seems flatter and less interesting. Don't bother to fasten your seat belts.

Courtship, culture, and postmodernity

Today's three most influential schools of academic thought on courtship—exchange theory, sociobiology, and close-relationship theory—do provide some useful insights. But these insights are fragmentary and quite limited. Exchange theory illuminates our growing capacity to understand marriage in essentially utilitarian terms. This approach has predictive power, insofar as our actual marrying behavior increasingly conforms to the expectations of the theory. Sociobiology exemplifies our cultural fatigue with idealistic views of romance. Its emphasis on the irrational nature of sexual desire and conflict nourishes contemporary cynicism. Its harsh realism further erodes those moral and religious ideals which, for earlier generations, sought

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to elevate sexual desire into lasting marital love.

Close-relationship theory illuminates our growing tendency to blur the distinctions between marriage and other relationships. Its theoretical insights ring true precisely to the extent that marriage itself is increasingly diluted and reduced to the fluidity and plasticity of just another "relationship." In short, the older understanding of marriage as covenantal, life-long, genealogical, self-sacrificial, and child-centered is gradually being replaced by an understanding of marriage as merely another dyadic intimate relationship. To the extent that this operation succeeds, close-relationship theory will resonate ever more clearly with our actual personal and social experiences.

And yet, while the models of courtship generated by these schools of thought illuminate certain current realities, they blind us to others. Marriage retains a central importance in American culture, both practically and as an ideal. While nonmarital sex and childbearing are much more common, it is also true that about 90 percent of Americans marry, and Americans of all ages and social classes continue to list a "happy marriage" as vital to their lives. Scholars would do us all a great service if they would rediscover their interest in marriage and the pathways leading to it. Marriage is not just a close relationship, or a sexual barter, or a consumer good. Illuminating these distinctions will require theoretical models that begin, above all, with curiosity about what marriage is.

This is not a plea for homespun "family values" and virtues. "Family values" discourse may actually contribute to our cultural apathy about marriage by obscuring the more radical, startling, and unsettling characteristics of monogamous marriage. Marriage is an erotic bond that bridges the fundamental sexual divide within the human species. It is an intersexual coupling, but it is not just about self-enhancing satisfaction; it is a procreative bond that generates human life. It resonates through the poetry, religion, art, myth, and symbols of the human spirit. Marriage embraces the life, the passions, the beauty, the journeys, the betrayals, the dreams, and, ultimately, the death of the other. A symptom of the curious flatness of our postmodern sexual culture is its growing inability to perceive the elemental depths and power of this primordial human bond.

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Media and business elites: still in conflict?

STANLEY ROTHMAN & AMY E. BLACK

FROM 1979 through 1980, S. Robert Lichter and the senior author of this article surveyed 13 American leadership groups. Two of these groups were businessmen chosen from various *Fortune* listings and journalists drawn from the country's most important media outlets at that time, including the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal, Time, Newsweek, U.S. News and World Report*, the three commercial television networks (CBS, NBC, ABC), and public television (PBS). The goal was to compare the attitudes and outlooks of traditional business leaders with those of the elite media.

The results of the study demonstrated that leading journalists were skeptical of business and of traditional American institutions.[1] On economic and political issues, journalists were well to the left of business elites. Although most journalists were not socialists, they strongly sympathized with the left

[1] "Media and Business Elites: Two Classes in Conflict?" *The Public Interest*, Number 69, Fall 1982.

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wing of the Democratic party. Thus 45 percent agreed that the American legal system favors the wealthy, more than twice the number of businessmen who held that point of view. And 68 percent of the journalists, compared with only 29 percent of the business leaders, believed that government should substantially reduce the income gap between rich and poor. On social issues, the pattern was much the same. Journalists were more permissive on such issues as abortion, homosexuality, and adultery than were businessmen. Finally, both groups eyed each other with suspicion, believing that the other exercised far more influence over American life than it should.

An analysis of news coverage and other evidence also demonstrated that, despite journalists' best efforts at objectivity, like academic scholars they tend to present the world in ways that reflect their own ideology. No pervasive and pronounced "bias" was found in reporting; rather, the analysis revealed patterns of significant ideological slippage in the treatment of complex and ambiguous issues, patterns which persisted over extensive periods of time.[2]

The 1979-80 study also surveyed the leading producers, directors, and writers of major television programs and motion pictures. By and large, the results were similar. The leading creative figures in the entertainment industry were far more liberal than businessmen on political and economic issues and even more so on social issues. Indeed, while they were somewhat more conservative than journalists on political and economic issues, they were significantly more liberal on social issues than were news media leaders. Content analyses of leading television programs and motion pictures over time demonstrated, as with journalism, a fairly clear (and unsurprising) relationship between the personal social and political outlook of their creators and the content of the work they produced.[3] The likelihood that films and television will reflect personal

[2] S. Robert Lichter, Stanley Rothman, and Linda Lichter, *The Media Elite* (Washington, D.C.: Adler and Adler, 1986), and S. Robert Lichter and Stanley Rothman, *Environmental Cancer: A Political Disease?* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999). Lichter continues to monitor systematically various news outlets as director of the Center for Media and Public Affairs in Washington, D.C.

[3] S. Robert Lichter, Linda Lichter, and Stanley Rothman, *Prime Time* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, 1995), and Stephen Powers, David Rothman, and Stanley Rothman, *Hollywood's America* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996).

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views, though restrained somewhat by estimates of potential markets and censorship, is greater among creative artists than among journalists for obvious reasons. Hollywood elites rarely encounter a professional expectation of "objectivity" or balance. Their vocation is to present the world subjectively, offering viewers a chance to see the world through the lens of their creative efforts.

Here come the Bobos?

Between 1979 and the middle 1990s, much changed in American life. Most extant studies show a general shift toward a more liberal personal and social morality, an attitudinal change Robert Bellah has called "expressive individualism." Bellah contrasted this with the more conservative forms of individualism, which support personal initiative but operate within a framework of traditional bourgeois values. Many commentators believe the shift has been revolutionary. Thus David Brooks argues, in *Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There,* that what was labeled the "culture war" is now essentially over and that expressive individualism has won the day, even among those who consider themselves to be conservatives. As William Mayer notes in his 1992 book *The Changing American Mind: How and Why American Public Opinion Changed between 1960 and 1988*, it is reasonable to believe that the mass media has strongly influenced the way Americans think. For example, it is hard to argue that American attitudes toward sexuality would have changed so radically, and in so short a time, absent a mass media whose views on this and related matters were quite progressive and whose depiction of the world in news stories, television shows, and films reflected this progressivism. Of course, for a variety of reasons, the media never moved very far ahead of mass audiences, but they did stand at the cutting edge of the new sensibility.

In 1995, the authors of this article partially replicated the earlier Rothman-Lichter study, overseeing a computer-assisted telephone survey of 1,969 members of nine elite groups. The sampling mode was somewhat different, as were some of the questions. The decision to use slightly different questions in the new study was a complicated one, reflecting the attitudi-

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nal changes that had taken place in the interim period—changes which meant that some of the questions we had asked earlier were now obsolete. Thus only a limited number of direct comparisons can be made between the newer and earlier studies. However, the new study raises and answers important questions, including what views various leadership groups hold of each other. From the results found in this new study, can it be said that the culture war is over? Have the once sharply divergent views of the media elite and business leaders converged in the past decades? How do the views of these two elite groups compare with those of the chief purveyors of mass culture?

In this article, we will compare the views of business, media, and Hollywood elites. We designed the three samples to include people who have reached positions of significant influence and power in their respective professions. The business sample includes chief executive officers, chairmen, presidents and vice presidents of Fortune 1000 companies. The sample of journalists mirrors that from the earlier study, including reporters and editors at major national newspapers, news magazines, and wire services. Finally, the Hollywood sample includes the writers, directors, and producers of recent top-grossing films and highest-rated television shows.

Race, gender, and religion

To begin our comparison of business and cultural leaders at the end of the twentieth century, we first analyzed the demographic characteristics of the three leadership sectors. In what ways do their social backgrounds differ? In general, business leaders are older than their counterparts in journalism and Hollywood. In this study, the mean age of businessmen is 53; whereas, on average, the media and television and movie elites are in their mid forties. Although none of the three leadership groups is particularly representative of the American population, business leaders were, in 1995, still almost exclusively white and male. The creators of television and movies were not much more representative than the business leaders—about eight of every nine in the Hollywood elite sample were male, and 95 percent were white. Journalists are by far the most diverse of the three groups. About one-third

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are female and more than 10 percent are racial and ethnic minorities. However, propelled by shifts in the culture, affirmative-action policies, and pressure from activist groups, the composition of American leadership cadres is beginning to change. The diversity of the elite groups is greater in the recent sample than in the survey two decades before, suggesting that traditionally underrepresented groups are slowly making progress entering the corridors of power.

Perhaps in part a function of age, but probably more a reflection of life-style differences, business leaders are the most likely of the three groups to be married. More than nine of ten (93.9 percent) respondents in the business sample are currently married, compared with three of four (76.5 percent) Hollywood elites and two of three (66 percent) journalists. About one of ten members of the cultural elite samples are currently divorced and about one in twenty report living with a partner. Media leaders are the most likely of the three groups to have never married; about one of six are single, a number roughly twice that of Hollywood's elites and more than four times the number of never-married business leaders.

The differences between the business and cultural elites appear even sharper when we compare the respondents' religious background and observance. Half of the business leaders are Protestant, compared with about one-third of the journalists (35.9 percent) and one of six (15.4 percent) creators of television and movies. Jews are well represented in all of the elite groups. Nine percent of the business sample are Jewish, as are about two in ten journalists (19 percent) and more than one-third of the Hollywood elite (36.8 percent). More than three of ten creators of television and movies identify with no particular religion, as do one of five journalists (21.9 percent) and only 8 percent of the business leaders. Members of the Hollywood sample are twice as likely as the other comparison groups to identify with religions outside the Judeo-Christian tradition.

As a group, business leaders are more religious than are members of the cultural elites. When asked about the role of religion in their lives, three of ten members of the business elite (30.5 percent), one in four Hollywood elites (26.3 percent), and one in five journalists (21.3 percent) say that religion is very important. The differences between the groups

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widen when comparing their self-reported attendance at religious services. For example, a majority of businessmen (54.6 percent) attend religious services at least once a month, and one-fourth of the respondents report attending services every week or more. In contrast, about three of ten journalists (30.2 percent) attend services monthly or more often, and almost seven of ten (69.7 percent) report going to religious services only a few times a year or less. Religion appears to be of the least significance to the Hollywood elite. Only one in five (21.2 percent) attend services at least monthly, compared with twice as many respondents (43.2 percent) who report never attending religious services.

As might be expected from a sample structured to capture those individuals at the highest levels of their professional hierarchies, members of all of the strategic elite groups report high annual household incomes. Business leaders report the highest incomes, with almost nine of ten (88.1 percent) reporting family earnings of more than $200,000 a year. The Hollywood elite also report high incomes: More than three-fourths of this sample report family incomes greater than $200,000 annually, and another 10 percent boast an average household income of between $125,000 and $200,000 a year. The income levels of the media elite are the most evenly divided among all income categories. Less than one of five journalists report earning more than $200,000 a year, and about five percent of the sample report annual incomes of $85,000 or less.

Education and social background

Members of all of the groups are highly educated. Only 3 percent of the business leaders have earned less than a college degree, and almost two-thirds of the respondents (64.3 percent) attended graduate school. A majority of the media elite (50.4 percent) ended their schooling with a bachelor's degree, but almost as many (44.2 percent) went to graduate school. Members of the Hollywood elite have somewhat less formal education than other elites; nonetheless, a majority of the creators of movies and television programming (53.8 percent) completed schooling through a college degree, and three of ten (30.3 percent) earned graduate degrees.

Not only are the leaders we sampled highly educated, but

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many also attended prestigious schools. Majorities of the respondents in each of the sample groups attended elite colleges and universities: Almost two of three media leaders (63.7 percent), six in ten of the Hollywood elite (60.1 percent), and slightly fewer business leaders (57.2 percent) earned degrees from schools ranked by the Carnegie Commission as among the most prestigious research universities and liberal arts colleges. Slightly less than one of four journalists (23.6 percent) earned their most recent degree from an Ivy League institution, as did one of seven business leaders (14.9 percent) and one in eight of the Hollywood elite (12.3 percent).

Relying on educational attainment is, admittedly, only a rough measure of social background. Business leaders appear to come from the least affluent families of the three groups compared in this essay. About half of their fathers (50.4 percent) and more than three of five of their mothers (62.6 percent) have a high school diploma or less schooling. In contrast, more than half of the fathers of Hollywood elites (54.7 percent) earned at least a college degree, as did more than three of five fathers of elite journalists (63.1 percent). As we found in the earlier study, it does seem that a business career still appeals to those who are seeking social mobility, while journalists, especially, are more likely to be the children of parents who have already "made it."

Overall, most of the leaders surveyed say they were raised in a large city or the suburbs. Indeed, about three of ten respondents in all the leadership groups are children of suburbia. Of the three groups compared, business leaders are the most likely to come from rural areas and small towns, and more members of the Hollywood elite report growing up in small cities.

How do they see each other?

As in the earlier study, respondents' views of each other were measured. First, respondents were asked to rate the groups on how much influence they currently exercise over American life on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 represents "very little influence" and 7 represents "a great deal of influence." Secondly, they were asked to go through the list again, rating each group on how much influence they would like each group to have.

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The responses are quite close to those of the earlier study. Both media and business leaders rank their respective group's level of influence lower than other elite groups' estimates. Correspondingly, the mean score of desired influence of the news media was highest among the journalists in our samples, and the mean score of desired business influence was highest among the business leaders. Journalists and Hollywood elites said that business leaders currently have a great deal of influence over American life (respectively ranking them 5.6 and 5.4 on the seven-point scale), and both groups expressed a desire to decrease business influence to close to the midpoint of the scale. Similarly, the business and Hollywood elites ranked the media as the most influential group in society (mean scores of 6.0 and 5.9, respectively) and noted a preference for a significant decline in media influence.

Significantly, journalists see business as the most influential elite group in the survey and wish to decrease their influence to a greater degree than does any other leadership group. Business leaders repay the compliment; that is, they rank the news media as the most powerful group included in the survey, and they would prefer to see a slight reduction in the power of the media. Hollywood elites are as negative about the power and influence of journalists as they are about business. One suspects that this has less to do with journalists' reporting of public affairs than with their coverage of the private lives of those in the motion-picture industry. In contrast to the views of business leaders, their mistrust of journalists is probably more personal than ideological. We have no hard evidence for this assertion but, as we shall see, media and Hollywood elites view the world in much the same way, suggesting that ideological differences are not the key issue.

Our findings suggest that every group would like blacks to exercise somewhat more influence over American life than they now do. Media and Hollywood elites rank the current influence of blacks relatively low (3.2 and 3.1 points, respectively), and business executives believe that blacks have slightly below average influence in American life, ranking the group 3.6 on the scale. While business leaders advocate a slight increase in black power to about the midpoint of the influence scale, both journalists and the creators of television and

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movies would like black influence to increase at least one point on the scale. When asked to rate their perceptions of the power of other underrepresented groups, the ratings follow a similar pattern.

Although the responses of business elites indicate that they would like religious leaders to have somewhat more influence over American life, journalists and television and movie elites would prefer religious influence to decrease. This is not surprising given their relative lack of religious commitment.

Social and political attitudes and behavior

When asked about their parents' voting behavior, a majority of respondents in all three groups remember them voting Democratic. A slim majority of the parents of business leaders are perceived by their children as having voted for Democratic candidates (51.9 percent of fathers and 55.7 percent of mothers), compared with more than three of five parents of journalists (62.8 percent of fathers and 61.8 percent of mothers) and parents of Hollywood elites (60.2 percent of fathers and 69.5 percent of mothers). As we shall see, businessmen have moved to the right of their parents, perhaps because of their social mobility, while journalists and TV/motion picture elites have moved sharply to the left. Thus the children of the various elite groups are further apart politically than were their parents.

More than two of three business leaders (67.5 percent) identify with the Republican party, whereas a majority of media elites (53.2 percent) and almost two of three Hollywood elites (62.5 percent) are Democrats. The distinctions sharpen further when comparing the groups' presidential voting behavior. Business leaders overwhelmingly supported George Bush in 1988, when almost nine of ten (88.1 percent) cast Republican ballots. Although support for Bush diminished in 1992, he still carried the vote of three-quarters of the business elite. Voting patterns among the cultural elites are quite the opposite. Three-quarters of elite journalists (76.1 percent) and seven of ten Hollywood elites (69.8 percent) voted for Michael Dukakis in 1988, and even larger percentages (91.3 percent of journalists and 82.7 percent of the movie and television sample) cast ballots for Bill Clinton in 1992.

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The vast differences in the partisan identification and voting behavior of economic and cultural elites reflect the three groups' very different perspectives on social and political issues. One way of gauging ideology is through "factor analysis," a statistical technique that measures the extent to which groups of responses to political and social questions "cluster" together in a coherent fashion and explain correlations between variables. Results of a factor analysis of over 30 opinion questions asked in the survey produced two strong factors. We labeled these two clusters of responses (or factors) "the Political Liberalism Index" and "the Social Liberalism Index."[4]

The first factor, Political Liberalism, measures where respondents fall on an ideological continuum with laissez-faire or rugged individualism on one end and collectivist liberalism (the term is John Dewey's) on the other. Max Weber, Louis Hartz, and Seymour Martin Lipset have all observed that America's uniqueness lies in her religious-cultural ethos. According to these theorists, the Protestant ethic fostered psychological autonomy and self-restraint and a strong, but disciplined, sense of self. In contrast, collectivist (or welfare-state) liberalism, which emerged during the Depression era, rests on the belief that the central government should ameliorate the economic inequalities and vagaries of capitalism. Three questions—asking for reactions to statements about government intervention to reduce the income gap, government job guarantees, and the opinion that government policies favor the rich—particularly contribute to this factor.

The second factor, Social Liberalism, measures the degree of support for traditional bourgeois values. In the traditional view, human beings possess a common nature related to their place in the cosmos. This conservative view stresses sobriety over playfulness, restraint over expression, and self-control over emotion. In contrast, the liberal view favors what Robert Bellah and his associates in *Habits of the Heart* labeled "expressive individualism." In their formulation, expressive individualism involves a shift in the meaning of the individual from a "being" to a "self"—that is, a shift from restraint of impulse to its free expression. The culture of expressive individualism is cen-

[4] Lichter and Rothman originally used other terms to describe these scales. In reporting the new data, we have shifted to, in our view, a more neutral terminology.

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tered around the exploration of experience and sensation—unfettered, impulsive, and nonrational. In the arts, humanities, and letters, it rejects traditional standards in favor of the avant-garde. The contrast of expressive individualism with traditional bourgeois culture could not be starker. Three questions—items measuring opinions on homosexuality, abortion, and cohabitation—are the most significant components of this index.

The survey reveals a continuing ideological divide between economic and cultural elites. To ease comparisons of our data, we standardized the factor scores to have a mean of 100 and standard deviation of 10, with numbers below 100 indicating that a group is more conservative than the average, and scores greater than 100 indicating ideology more liberal than the mean. Business leaders are more conservative than journalists and Hollywood elites on both factors. Executives obtain a mean score of 101.5 on the social-attitudes factor, indicating that they are somewhat more liberal than the mean of the other elites surveyed, which includes, for example, religious elites. The cultural elites, however, boast even higher factor scores: Journalists and Hollywood elites score 106.3 and 106.5, respectively, about half a standard deviation higher than the business leaders.

The ideological distinctions sharpen even further when analyzing the three groups' scores on the Political Liberalism Index. On this indicator, business leaders are very conservative, scoring 90.6, almost one standard deviation below the mean of all elites sampled. In distinct contrast, the media elite have a mean score of 104, and the creators of television and movies display even more liberal views, scoring 106.2 on the scale.

The two tables (see next page) display three of the central questions for each index. For example, Table 1 includes questions measuring Social Liberalism. As the data in this table show, large percentages of all three groups express agreement on the abortion issue. Almost all of the cultural elites are pro-choice, most voicing strong agreement with a woman's right to decide whether or not to have an abortion. Eighty-six percent of business leaders also express pro-choice sentiments, with about six of ten indicating strong agreement. The views of

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cultural and economic leaders diverge more widely on the other two questions. Whereas almost all (94 percent) of the business elite say that adultery is wrong, slightly more than three-quarters of the journalists and Hollywood elite share these sentiments. When asked if homosexuality is as acceptable as heterosexuality, the differences sharpen even further. About four of five creators of television and films and three-quarters of journalists find homosexuality as acceptable as heterosexuality. In contrast, only slightly more than one of three business leaders (35 percent) share these views.

Table 2 compares the three groups' responses to questions on political and economic issues that load heavily on the Political Liberalism Index. Again, the responses reveal many distinctions between the cultural and economic elites. When asked if the government should work to ensure that everyone has a

Table 1: Elite Opinions on Social Issues

By: Total % who agree (% who strongly agree)

	Abortion—right to choose[a]	Adultery wrong[b]	Gay lifestyle acceptable[c]
Business	86 (62)	94 (61)	35 (9)
Media	97 (84)	78 (45)	73 (40)
TV/Movie	96 (87)	77 (41)	79 (51)

[a] It is a woman's right to decide whether or not to have an abortion.
[b] It is wrong for a married person to have sexual relations with someone other than his or her spouse.
[c] Homosexuality is as acceptable a lifestyle as heterosexuality.

Table 2: Elite Opinions on Political and Economic Issues

By: Total % who agree (% who strongly agree)

	Government guarantee jobs[a]	Reduce income gap[b]	Decrease regulation[c]
Business	34 (9)	24 (2)	94 (71)
Media	71 (30)	75 (34)	39 (5)
TV/Movie	63 (30)	61 (27)	39 (6)

[a] The government should work to ensure that everyone has a job.
[b] The government should work to reduce the income gap between the rich and the poor.
[c] Less government regulation of business would be good for the country.

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job, large majorities of journalists and Hollywood elites agreed (71 percent and 63 percent, respectively). In contrast, only one-third of business leaders support government job guarantees, with only one in ten offering strong agreement. The distinctions widen further when comparing responses to the statement, "The government should work to reduce the income gap between the rich and the poor." Three-quarters of the journalists and six of ten Hollywood elites agreed with the statement, compared to slightly less than one-fourth (24 percent) of the business leaders. Business leaders are nearly unanimous in their support of reducing government regulation, as 94 percent of those surveyed agreed with the statement, "Less government regulation of business would be good for the country." The cultural elites are less wary of regulation—39 percent of these two samples held the same views as the business leaders.

Trust and alienation

Cultural elites seem to be both more alienated and less trustful of people than are members of the business elite. When asked to respond to the question, "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people," the levels of trust vary widely among the three elite groups. Overall, business leaders are very trusting (nine of ten express agreement), while the cultural elites are more cynical. Only six of ten television and movie makers (59 percent) and seven of ten journalists (69 percent) say most people can be trusted. The attitudes of businessmen are to be expected: The successful functioning of a market economy requires reasonably high levels of trust. It is not clear why journalists are less trustful. One could argue that to be a successful journalist requires that one be somewhat suspicious of other's motives. On the other hand, liberals (and most journalists are liberals) supposedly hold an optimistic worldview. The liberal argument that various ameliorative measures can improve the lot of human beings presupposes a level of belief in human goodness under the proper social conditions. The findings are even more mysterious with regard to the Hollywood elite. Their vocation does not require lack of trust in people and, again, a liberal perspective is supposed to be based on a belief in human goodness.

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One other variable may be related to the lack of trust expressed by some cultural elites. When asked if they agree with the statement, "The structure of our society causes many people to feel alienated," cultural and business elites voiced very different opinions. About three of five business leaders (62 percent) agree with this statement, although only one in six express strong agreement. In contrast, most members of the cultural elite believe that society causes much alienation. More than eight of ten journalists and Hollywood elites (86 percent and 87 percent, respectively) agree, with roughly half of each group expressing strong agreement.

In addition to asking about levels of trust, the survey included a question about philanthropic activity. We asked: "On the average, how many hours per month do you spend doing volunteer work for a charity, a school, a church or other nonprofit organization?" Business leaders score highest, reporting an average of 7.6 hours per month to charitable work; Hollywood elites are in second place with 6.6 hours, or about 15 percent less. Journalists, however, report spending a little more than half as much time volunteering, averaging 3.9 hours of philanthropic work monthly. The differences between the three groups may partially reflect differences in political ideology. American conservatives emphasize individual initiatives and private philanthropy, while liberals believe the public sector is best equipped to help those in need. Perhaps the differences we have found are therefore not too surprising.

Bobos in trouble

The most divisive issues among the three groups in our survey are clearly economic and political. The business and cultural elites still divide sharply on questions of equality and government regulation of the economy. Despite the discrediting of centrally planned economies produced by the collapse of the Soviet Union and other Communist regimes, attitudes about government control of the economy have not changed very much since the 1980s. The cultural elite maintains strong levels of support for a more egalitarian society in which government plays a substantial role. They are distrustful of the power of business and would like to see it reduced. While the contemporary Democratic party is more moderate than it was

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in the 1970s, it still contains a strong populist wing committed to income redistribution and regulation of business.

On the other hand, some of the major issues of the culture war seem less divisive, at least among the elite groups we surveyed. Journalists, leaders of the business community, and Hollywood elites all strongly support abortion rights, though the greater public is very divided on the issue. Disagreements about adultery and homosexuality (perhaps the most salient issue of the culture war today) are sharper, but on the latter question it is obvious that the culture has moved a great deal in the past 20 years. After all, more than one-third of businessmen today believe that homosexuality is as acceptable as heterosexuality. We doubt that the same group would have given that kind of response 20 years ago.

The culture war is not over yet. Despite important cultural shifts, the business elite retains tattered remnants of an older, more traditional morality. However, the direction of change seems clear, and this study may well underestimate its magnitude. After all, our business sample tends to be composed of those in their fifties who have already reached the highest levels of success. Behind them is a new generation about which David Brooks was clearly writing: They are undoubtedly less "bourgeois" in their values than those we studied.

In his classic *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, Daniel Bell questioned whether the traditional capitalist economy of the United States (and, furthermore, its political institutions) can survive these broad cultural shifts. Brooks takes a much more sanguine view: The new elites may play hard, but they also work hard and exhibit a great deal of self-control. While Brooks's argument has considerable force, we tend to agree with Bell. Thus, despite our sympathy for at least some of the cultural shifts that have occurred in the last 50 years, we share his concerns. It is not clear that a citizenry supporting the free expression of impulse and immediate gratification can sustain an advanced industrial economy or even a relatively civilized social order over the long run.

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Bertrand de Jouvenel's melancholy liberalism

BRIAN C. ANDERSON

OF the major political thinkers of his generation—including Raymond Aron, Isaiah Berlin, Michael Oakeshott, and Leo Strauss—Bertrand de Jouvenel suffers from relative neglect. During the 1950s and 1960s, the French philosopher and political economist enjoyed a considerable reputation in the English-speaking world. He lectured as a visiting professor at Yale and the University of California–Berkeley, and his books garnered serious reviews in prestigious journals. But by the time of his death in 1987, his star had dimmed. Read through a span of recent political-theory journals and you will rarely encounter his name.

The neglect is not surprising. Jouvenel's thought does not fit into the two categories that unfortunately came to dominate academic thinking on politics during the 1970s and con-

This is the sixth in our occasional series of "Reconsiderations." Previous essays have examined the works of Louis Hartz, Richard M. Titmuss, Herbert Croly, Marshall McLuhan, and Frederick Douglass.

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tinue to rule it today: the arid left-liberalism of analytic philosophers like Ronald Dworkin, which reduces political thought to abstract reflection on moral and legal principles, and the nihilist radicalism of post-structuralist thinkers like Michel Foucault, which irresponsibly seeks to blow up the bourgeois world to clear the way for who knows what.

Jouvenel's work, published over five decades in a series of learned, beautifully written books and essays, is anything but abstract. It harkens back to an older style of political thought (as old as Aristotle, really, but arching over the centuries to include Montesquieu and Alexis de Tocqueville) that brings together moral and political philosophy and painstaking historical and institutional analysis.

His work is also a model of political responsibility. The philosopher Pierre Manent places Jouvenel in the sober tradition of *libéralisme triste*—melancholy liberalism—whose great representative is Tocqueville and among whose recent exemplars I would include Irving Kristol and Manent himself. These anti-utopians fully acknowledge the basic decency and justness of liberal democratic civilization. But they are also aware of its profound weaknesses—the erosion of moral and spiritual life, the hollowing out of civil society, the growth of an overbearing state, and the "joyless quest for joy," as Leo Strauss once put it, of a society dedicated chiefly to commercial pursuits. The task of *libéralisme triste* is to illumine the tensions and possibilities of this liberal civilization, in the hope of advising citizens and statesmen how best to cultivate the goods and avoid or at least moderate the evils that attend it.

Thankfully, there are signs that Jouvenel is sparking renewed interest. Over the last half-decade, two publishers—Liberty Fund Press and Transaction Publishers—have made available again to English readers some of his most important work. It seems an ideal occasion, then, to reconsider Jouvenel's contribution to political thought.

A life in the age of extremes

Bertrand de Jouvenel was born in 1903 into an aristocratic French household swept up in the political and intellectual currents of the early twentieth century. His father, Baron Henri de Jouvenel, was a well-known Dreyfusard politician and news-

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paper editor, and his mother, Sarah Claire Boas, the daughter of a wealthy Jewish industrialist, ran a trendy Parisian salon, so young Bertrand met many of the leading artists, writers, and politicians of the day. Through his mother, a passionate supporter of Czechoslovak independence, he gained his earliest political experience, working as private secretary to Eduard Benes, Czechoslovakia's first prime minister, when barely out of his teens.

Jouvenel was close to both of his parents, who divorced in 1912, but his relationship to his father was sorely tested during the early twenties. After divorcing Bertrand's mother, Henri had remarried the novelist and sexual provocateur Colette. In 1919, the 16-year-old Bertrand, strikingly handsome—"all sinews and lank," observes Colette biographer Judith Thurman—entered a scandalous affair with his stepmother, then in her late forties, who had seduced the bookish teenager. In October 1923, according to one version of events, Henri surprised Bertrand and Colette in bed, definitively ending a marriage that had already soured. A remorseful Bertrand "was horrified to see myself, or to believe myself, the cause of this drama," but continued the affair for two more years. He later patched things up with his father, but Colette always haunted him. Even as an old man, happily married to his second wife Helene (he briefly married war correspondent Martha Gellhorn during the early 1930s), Jouvenel had difficulty speaking of his forbidden romance without emotion.

Jouvenel's formal education was more conventional than his love life. Subsequent to studying at the Lycée Hoche in Versailles, he graduated from the Sorbonne, where he read in law and mathematics. He later took up a succession of short-term academic posts that culminated in an appointment to the prestigious École Science Politique in 1975. He always regretted not having a steadier academic career, which would have given him the opportunity to mold a generation of students as Aron and Strauss did. As founder and director of the think tank SEDEIS (Societé d'Etudes et de Documentation Economiques Industrielles et Sociales), an institution with many connections both inside and outside the academy, he did have a huge impact on the education of French elites by familiarizing them, through regular seminars and publications, with

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Anglo-American economic ideas.

Jouvenel's political education owed less to the academy than to his extensive work as a journalist, specializing in international relations, from the late 1920s until the Second World War. As political scientists Marc Landy and Dennis Hale observe, "To a degree unparalleled by any other chronicler of the rise of totalitarianism in the 1930s, even Orwell, de Jouvenel witnessed the key events and came to know the key individuals firsthand." Jouvenel interviewed at length Mussolini, Churchill, and, in a world-wide exclusive in 1935, Hitler. His journalistic activities brought him to various European hotspots, including Austria during the Anschluss and Czechoslovakia during the Nazi invasion. This hands-on experience, note Landy and Hale, gave Jouvenel a feel for the *stuff* of politics, its tragic contingencies and mundane complexities, its resistance to abstract categories and utopian schemes, its dangers and decencies.

Like many of his generation, Jouvenel found his way to support for liberal democracy only gradually. At the age of 23, he stood unsuccessfully for Parliament as a Radical-Socialist candidate. For a while, disgusted by the decadence of the French Third Republic, he sought solace on the other political extreme, and in 1936 joined François Doriot's Parti Popular Français, a right-wing populist—some would say quasi-fascist—party. He would leave the party two years later, however, because of Doriot's shameful support for the Munich Pact. His eyes now opened, Jouvenel signed up with the French Army intelligence to struggle against the rising Nazi menace. In 1942, following France's armistice with Germany, he worked for the French resistance, eventually fleeing to Switzerland with the Gestapo in pursuit. By now, he had become the full-fledged antitotalitarian liberal that he remained the rest of his life.

Jouvenel's flirtation with the radical right during the thirties came back to trouble him in the early 1980s, when the Israeli scholar Zeev Sternhell falsely accused him of collaborating with the Nazis. Jouvenel sued for libel in 1983 and won. Raymond Aron, who had left his hospital bed against his doctor's wishes to testify on Jouvenel's behalf, dropped dead of a stroke immediately after telling the court that his longtime friend was "one of the two or three leading political

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thinkers of his generation"—and no collaborator.

In addition to his journalistic activities, Jouvenel published several books prior to the war, including, in 1928, *L'economie dirigée* (coining the term the French still use for economic planning), a 1933 study of the Great Depression in the United States, and three novels. After the war, he mostly abandoned journalism to concentrate on writing the treatises in political philosophy that won him widespread acclaim. Jouvenel's postwar works contain the three main themes of his mature thought: an effort to understand the hypertrophy of the modern state; a meditation on the common good in pluralistic modern societies; and an attempt to describe the dynamics of political life. Let us look at each in turn.

Beware the Minotaur

Jouvenel wrote his first major work of political philosophy, *On Power: The Natural History of Its Growth*, from Swiss exile as World War II raged and Europe lay in ruins. Its basic aim, one which runs through all of Jouvenel's postwar writings, is to examine how the modern state became so dangerous to human liberty.

The long shadow of the totalitarian state darkens every page of *On Power*. National Socialism and communism, in their quest to revolutionize the bourgeois economic and political condition, had desolated entire nations. Never before had such state power been unleashed. But even in contemporary liberal democratic societies, the centralized state had grown to a disturbing size. Jouvenel's libertarian ideal—"the recognition, or the assumption, that there is in every man the same pride and dignity as had hitherto been assured and protected, but for the aristocracy only, by privileges"—found less and less breathing room in the collectivist modern world.

Jouvenel's labyrinthine book is a kind of pathology of modern politics. Jouvenel reviews Western history to determine exactly when centralized authority—Power, or the Minotaur, as he alternatively calls it—first extended its reach and what allowed it to do so. The Minotaur started to stir, he discovers, in the twelfth century; it grew "continuously" until the eighteenth and has exponentially increased in size since then.

Jouvenel blames Power's growth on several permanent fea-

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tures of centralized government (following Jouvenel, I will capitalize the "p" in power whenever referring to the state apparatus). First, the central governing authority naturally seeks dominance. After all, flawed human beings occupy the offices of Power, and they often want to lord over everybody else. "Is not the will to Power rooted deep in human nature?" Jouvenel asks. The desire for dominion is not the whole story of human nature, as Jouvenel would readily agree, but every truthful account of political life—from the Biblical narrative of David to George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*—recognizes its eternal existence.

The second explanation for the concentration of Power is political rivalry. For political communities to survive military challenge, their leaders must be able to act decisively and forcefully. Fail to match your rival's punch—his capacity swiftly to mobilize his citizenry and levy their wealth or develop deadly new technologies—and you could quickly find yourself out for the count. To keep pace with powerful Spain in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, for example, the respective dynasties of England and France had to take more authority into their hands, increasing the number of men under arms and hiking taxes. More recently, during World War II, the allied democracies used propaganda and state direction of the economy—Power-boosting tools generally shunned by free societies—to resist the Nazi war machine. The competition for military supremacy feeds the Minotaur.

The medieval moment

These two explanations, true as far as they go, still do not explain why Power started to expand when it did nor why that expansion intensified dramatically after the seventeenth century. For that, Jouvenel shows, greater attention to the logic of Western history is necessary. *On Power* exemplifies what I think is one of the great virtues of Jouvenel's political thought: In order to expand our perspective on the events affecting us, it shifts our attention from the immediacy of the present, which can be blind, to the past and, as we will see, to the future. In this book, Jouvenel breaks with the popular Enlightenment story—"pure fantasy," he deems it—of monarchs "to whose exactions there are no bounds" and modern demo-

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cratic governments "whose resources are proportionate to their authority." The true picture, we learn from history, is much more ambiguous.

Consider the Middle Ages. Far from crushing men with arbitrary force, the medieval king inhabited a spiritual, moral, and institutional world that kept him tightly bound. The divine law, as the Catholic Church taught it, limited the king's authority, indeed all human authority, from above. The king was God's servant, with a sacred duty to preserve God's created order. That hierarchical order, among other things, made the king not master of, but simply first among, nobles—each a rival authority with land and forces of his own. To get anything done the king had to go, hat in hand, to his fellow nobles to beg for men and funds, all the while making sure the Church did not disapprove too strongly. In turn, the common law, a human artifact written within the framework of the divine law and borrowing some of its luster, limited Power from below with innumerable precedents and customs. Jouvenel remarks, "The consecrated king of the Middle Ages was a Power as tied down and as little arbitrary as we can conceive." God was sovereign, not men; there was no absolute or uncontrolled human authority.

Some might accuse the Catholic Jouvenel of romanticizing medieval life. I think this is to mistake his point. Of course, kings often rudely violated the law, as Jouvenel admits, and the medieval mindset failed to extend to every man and woman full recognition of the dignity that is their due. But the law wove a religious and customary web around Power that prevented it from completely breaking loose and becoming absolute. Recall, Jouvenel says, that the Catholic Church's sanctions "brought the Emperor Henry IV to fall on his knees before Gregory VII in the snow of Canossa." In such a universe, Power could expand only slowly.

This complex web began to unravel when European kings, keen to boost their authority, threw their lot in with the people to beat down the nobles who kept Power in check. The people looked to the kings to free them from the petty and sometimes not-so-petty oppressions of the aristocrats, whom the kings, in top Machiavellian form, had successfully encouraged to ditch their age-old responsibilities to the plebs. From this

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alliance between kings and the masses arose, beginning in the fifteenth century and lasting until the eighteenth, Europe's absolute monarchies. The absolute monarchs, driving the aristocracy into the ground, centralized and modernized Power and wielded resources far greater than medieval kings. The Protestant Reformation also helped tear apart the medieval web and amplify monarchical Power by giving reformed princes leeway to redefine the meaning of divine laws and to disregard custom; Catholic princes, to keep up, began to skirt the Church's rules themselves. The Minotaur grew.

Democracy on trial

But what really triggers Power's dramatic expansion, Jouvenel suggests, is the birth of the democratic age, which finishes off the dying medieval order. The political scientist Pierre Hassner, a keen reader of Jouvenel, has it exactly right: *On Power* "is a generalization of Alexis de Tocqueville's idea that the French Revolution, rather than breaking the absolutism of the state, further concentrated power in the hands of the state." Jouvenel sees democratic times extending Power's reach in at least three different, but related, ways.

First and most fundamental is the triumph in the eighteenth century of the doctrine of popular sovereignty, the idea that "the people," not some divine source or ancient custom, make the final call on all matters of law and social organization. "The denial of a divine lawgiving and the establishment of a human lawgiving," warns Jouvenel, "are the most prodigious strides which a society can take towards a truly absolute Power." Outside of small communities, popular sovereignty, taken literally, is absurd. The people themselves cannot actually govern and pretty soon others—often a single other—rule in their name. And these new rulers find it easier than ever before to direct and mobilize society.

Popular sovereignty erodes the restraints on what political communities can imagine doing. If the law is solely an expression of the people's will, where would the limits on it come from? Anything becomes possible: the rounding up of political opponents, the bombing of civilians, laws condemning minorities or the unfit to extinction, the creation of genetic monstrosities or genetic supermen.

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In addition, popular sovereignty encourages the notion that the state is a tool directly to secure the people's well-being. Power is accordingly burdened with a surfeit of new responsibilities, from running jobs programs and providing welfare, to redistributing wealth and regulating businesses, to funding scientific research and guaranteeing education to all citizens. Some of this is reasonable and salutary, no doubt, but taken together it increases the state's sway.

Popular sovereignty also brings mass conscription: Since everyone ostensibly has an equal stake in Power, everyone must defend it. Historian Hippolyte Taine put it well: Universal suffrage and mass conscription are like "twin brothers ... the one placing in the hands of every adult person a voting paper, the other putting on his back a soldier's knapsack." The Sun King Louis XIV, the most absolute of absolute monarchs, would have loved to institute conscription for his endless wars across seventeenth-century Europe, but he felt himself powerless to do it. It was the French Revolution that first militarized the masses and sent them forth across Europe's battlefields.

The second way in which the democratic age extended Power was through the unleashing of relativism. Popular sovereignty meant *self*-sovereignty, the right of each individual to decide his own right and wrong. This Protagorism, as Jouvenel terms it, in which man becomes the measure of all things, summons the Minotaur to quell the social disorder it inevitably unleashes. In a later work, he gravely writes, "To the entire extent to which progress develops hedonism and moral relativism, to which individual liberty is conceived as the right of man to obey his appetites, nothing but the strongest of powers can maintain society in being." The social theorist Michael Novak would later make the same point: "For a society without inner policemen ... there aren't enough policemen in the world to make men civil."

Jouvenel pointed out that relativism calls forth Power a second way. The loss of objective standards is existentially unbearable, opening "an aching void in the room of beliefs and principles." The secular religions of communism and National Socialism would draw nourishment from this crisis of meaning, building up Power to truly monstrous proportions.

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In Jouvenel's stark account, totalitarianism is born of the modern world's moral confusion.

Finally, Power grows in the democratic age because of the erosion of civil society. Democratic regimes base themselves on the individual, and individualism tends to hollow out or utterly destroy civil society. The modern state wages a relentless attack on the "social authorities"—in today's policy jargon, the mediating structures of families, churches, businesses, and other associations that stand between the state and the individual and that constitute extra-individual sources of authority and meaning. The attack can be blunt and brutal, as in the totalitarian regimes' total repression of civil society. Or it can take a softer form, as when the bureaucratic and inefficient welfare state takes over from families the responsibility for rearing children. In either case, though on very different scales, one finds state Power vastly increased and individual liberties menaced or obliterated. In a social field in which there are but two actors—Power and the individual—humans cannot flourish.

Jouvenel does not have much good to say about the liberal democratic West in *On Power*. He does suggest the possibility of sustaining the flickering light of political and human liberty by supporting moral and religious belief in a "higher code" that would restrain human willfulness, and by educating leaders and citizens to be vigilant of Power, like their medieval predecessors. But he views the separation-of-powers doctrine advocated by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century liberal constitutionalists as a weak reed against Power's tank-like advance. Since all modern constitutions base themselves on the people's will, they will not long deter Power's advance.

In fact, Jouvenel's argument in *On Power* risks becoming a kind of reverse Marxism, in which history ends not in bliss but in the concentration camp. The gigantic state is "the culmination of the history of the West," he observes in the book's grim closing paragraphs, implying that there is not a lot we can do about it. Thankfully, the evolution of the democracies in the years since Jouvenel wrote the book does not bear out its gloomiest warnings.

Despite its excessive pessimism, *On Power* stands as a permanent warning to the citizens and statesmen of liberal demo-

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cratic regimes that their freedom is difficult to sustain, for reasons inseparable from the logic of their own principles. And in Jouvenel's ensuing work, most evocatively in *Sovereignty: An Inquiry into the Political Good*, he develops a more constructive political science, one which looks more positively upon liberal constitutionalism.

Between thick and thin

Published in 1957, *Sovereignty* is Jouvenel's masterpiece and one of the great works in the tradition of *libéralisme triste*. Along with revisiting *On Power*'s concerns about the dangers of popular sovereignty, it explores what the earlier book left unexamined. If collectivism is not the inevitable destiny of modern liberal democratic societies, then how best might they avoid it? What kind of excellences might liberal democracies achieve? In *Sovereignty* and in other writings from the fifties and sixties, Jouvenel offers a dynamic and political conception of the common good that reinforces the best virtues and combats the worst vices of liberal regimes.

On Power might give the impression that Jouvenel is a partisan of the *ancien régime* or even the classical polis, but his postwar writings make clear that he only has one foot in the old, with the other planted firmly in the new. As for the old, Jouvenel, like Aristotle before him, believes that there *is* such a thing as the political good, and that it cannot be defined as the sum total of my individual good plus your individual good plus everybody else's individual good. Man is not just a selfish animal but also a social and political animal, for whom certain essential goods come only because he belongs to a political community.

However, this political good is most emphatically not a recommendation to restore the ancient polis. Down that road, Jouvenel argues, lies tragedy. To use state power to try to bring back the closed community and moral harmony of the classical city in a pluralistic modern liberal society is utopian. It would involve massive coercion and still ultimately prove unsuccessful, as all such efforts since the French Revolution have shown, with incalculable costs in human suffering.

There is a simple reason such projects bring tyranny: The world has changed since the time of Pericles. Four "corollar-

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ies" that were preconditions for the "thick" community of the ancient city no longer apply today. The first is small size. "The city must not become too large," Jouvenel observes, "for otherwise, when the number of citizens is too great for intimacy between them to be possible, the harmony is less intense." How small? Plato claims roughly 5,000 families—like a tiny Alaskan town. Next is complete homogeneity. Even the inhabitants of a small Alaskan town would not match the uniformity of culture and educational background of a classical Greek city. Yet without homogeneity of this sort, the harmony of the classical polis is impossible. The third and fourth corollaries are also about maintaining harmony. The third: "It is dangerous to allow the entry into the city of beliefs and customs from outside, for these create a motley variety of reactions and practices." So, no immigration, no CNN, no foreign literature, no travel outside the city's walls. Corollary four is immutability. The community must snuff out the fire of innovation everywhere it threatens to blaze up.

You begin to get the picture. It looks like Albania under Enver Hoxa. Exactly what characterizes liberal democratic modernity—"the enlargement of societies, the aggregation of disparate peoples, the contagion of cultures and the burgeoning of novelties," in Jouvenel's words—is what the corollaries definitively rule out. Yet most of us do see important goods in big cities: the free clash of ideas and sensibilities and beliefs, contact with foreign cultures, and fancy new toys like DVD machines, to say nothing about new medicines to treat heart disease or AIDS. To try to impose some blueprint of the common good that would regulate this complex, open reality would of necessity be tyrannical.

The upshot: The classical goods of complete harmony and thick community that the modern world has undermined—and there is no doubt that they *are* goods—are incompatible with other goods that we cannot imagine living without. Too many armchair communitarians, on the left and the right, simply fail to see this.

If Jouvenel rejects any return to Greece as destructive of our modern freedoms, however, he does not turn around and embrace the libertarianism that, say, Charles Murray serves up in *What It Means to Be a Libertarian*. In Murray's view,

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government should do next to nothing, refusing to make judgments about citizens' moral choices and giving the market and the institutions of civil society free reign, except when monopolists or thieves or murderers mess things up.

This thin understanding of the political, Jouvenel contends, is not an adequate governing philosophy for a modern liberal democracy. Indeed, to the extent that government, basing itself on the self-sovereignty of man, refuses to discriminate between moral and immoral choices, it surrenders to the relativism that already disturbs liberal societies. As *On Power* showed, such relativism beckons the state to restore the order it destroys and to fill the emptiness it creates in the soul.

For Jouvenel, the modern democratic state has a much richer moral task. It is to create the conditions that let "social friendship"—a common good compatible with the goods and freedoms of modernity—blossom. Jouvenel describes this modern common good as resting "in the strength of the social tie, the warmth of the friendship felt by one citizen for another and the assurance each has of predictability in another's conduct." To nurture this mutual trust is the essence of the art of politics.

Daniel J. Mahoney and David DesRosiers, in their illuminating introduction to the Liberty Fund edition of *Sovereignty*, correctly observe that the book "contains one of the richest accounts of the permanent requirements of statesmanship written in this century." Among the tasks of the liberal statesman are the following (this is by no means an exhaustive list): First, the statesman must prudentially balance innovation and conservation. Modern societies, severed from the past, are open, mobile, and constantly transforming. Government needs to respond to the constant flux with policies that attenuate some of its worst effects. For contrary to what "dynamists" like *Reason* magazine's Virginia Postrel think, human beings cannot live in a world that is always changing: Such a condition is profoundly alienating. Thus Jouvenel would be willing to use government funds to retrain workers displaced by a new technology.

One way of pursuing this balance is to anticipate future trends as much as possible in order to cushion their impact. Hence Jouvenel's extensive research in "future studies," given

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its fullest theoretical treatment in a fascinating but sadly out-of-print 1968 book, *The Art of Conjecture* (here again he shakes us from what I would call, if you can forgive the somewhat barbarous neologism, our presentism). The "art" in the title is a tip-off. In Jouvenel's view, there is no science of the future, only reasoned inferences from existing trends.

Next, the statesman must do nothing to harm and everything possible to help a culture of ordered liberty prosper short of imposing a state truth. As we have seen, the free society cannot survive if license prevails. At a minimum this means a statesman should be a model of self-restraint in his own life. (No *Esquire* crotch-shots or trysts with interns, in other words.) But one can imagine an array of policies—President George W. Bush is pursuing some of them right now—that would shore up, rather than weaken, ordered liberty without resorting to massive state coercion. Of course, the political leader cannot do this alone—not hardly. This is a task for all citizens of a free society, particularly those who participate in culture-forming institutions.

The statesman must also regulate "noxious activities" that threaten social friendship. Racists would get no license to march in a Jouvenelian liberal democracy. Parties that advocated revolution or violence would find no home there, either. Jouvenel believes civility is crucial to a free society.

And finally, the statesman must deflate hopes for a permanent solution to the political problem. There is no ultimate solution in politics, only temporary "settlements," as Jouvenel put it in a later book. To try to conjure up ancient Greece again or to dispense with politics almost all together (the communitarian and libertarian dreams, respectively) are both solutions, not settlements. Politics is our permanent this-worldly condition; to deny that fact is to create, or at least tempt, tyranny.

The good and bad of capitalism

Nowhere is there greater need for vigilance in cultivating the common good in modern democracies than with regard to the free market. To be sure, Jouvenel is a strong defender of the efficiency and productivity of a free economy. The capitalist dynamo has eased life for millions, giving them choices

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and opportunities and time unavailable to all but the few in premodern societies. Jouvenel knows that economic growth and consumer satisfaction are the imperatives that drive our societies.

But having more goodies does not constitute the good life. Quality of life is key to assessing a decent society. Like Pope John Paul II, Jouvenel argues that a strong moral culture and vigorous political institutions must serve as makeweights against the market. Thus Jouvenel would probably have had few qualms about cracking down on Hollywood violence and Calvin Klein kiddie-porn ads. For just as government has a responsibility to educate citizens politically, so too it is important to lift the preferences of consumers to higher ends. "We live in majority societies where beautiful things will be wiped out unless the majority appreciates them," Jouvenel pointedly observed during the sixties. A market society is praiseworthy only if the choices people make within it are praiseworthy.

Another area in which the market needs public oversight is the environment. In a highly organized modern society, Jouvenel wrote in the 1957 essay "From Political Economy to Political Ecology," "Nature disappears behind the mass of our fellow creatures." We forget what we owe it. I can imagine some conservative readers rushing to put Jouvenel back on the shelf at this point. But Jouvenel's green thumb is much closer to legal theorist Peter Huber's (or Theodore Roosevelt's) market-friendly conservationism than it is to Norwegian Arne Naess's antihumanist deep ecology.

The environment is for man, not man for the environment—that Biblical insight is one Jouvenel embraces. Promethean modern economies have made man master of the Earth, and that is potentially to the good, he says. But with mastery comes responsibility. In a 1968 essay entitled "The Stewardship of the Earth," Jouvenel sums up his environmental vision: "The Earth has been given to us for our utility and enjoyment, but also entrusted to our care, that we should be its caretakers and gardeners." This is sensible stuff. It means smart environmental regulations establishing wildlife reserves, cleaning up rivers, protecting endangered species, and punishing toxic dumpers, not trying to restore some pre-industrial arcadia (there is that anti-utopianism again).

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If Jouvenel's support for the free market stops short of an idolatry of choice and the right to pollute, it enthusiastically resists government interventions aimed at redistributing wealth. "Only Hayek has rivaled Bertrand de Jouvenel in demonstrating why redistributionism in the democracies results in the atrophy of personal responsibility and the hypertrophy of the bureaucracy and the centralized state instead of in relief to the hapless minorities it is pledged to serve," enthuses the sociologist Robert Nisbet about a book Jouvenel first published in 1952, called *The Ethics of Redistribution*. In this short, profound study, Jouvenel ignores (though he agrees with it) the economic argument against the redistribution of wealth: that it eats away at incentives and so impoverishes everybody. Instead, he concentrates on the moral arguments against redistribution in an indictment of contemporary left-liberalism as damning as we have.

Jouvenel's three arguments remain unanswered. One is that redistribution quickly becomes regressive. Jouvenel shows that levying the wealth of the rich does not provide nearly enough economic resources to offer a subsistence minimum to the down and out. Instead, government must dip into the pockets of the middle class and even the lower middle class, who themselves receive income transfers. This insight, Jouvenel avers, upsets a widely held belief: "that our societies are extremely rich and that their wealth is merely maldistributed." Pursuing redistribution in the face of this truth, he adds, "involves the debasement of even the lower middle-class standard of life." Society becomes proletarianized.

The second argument against redistribution is that it corrodes personal responsibility. By providing for basic needs, the redistributionist state weakens the individual's independence and civil society's authority, threatening to make people into dependent drudges. This also reinforces the modern impulsion to centralization described in *On Power*.

Finally, redistribution, by confiscating higher incomes, means that the wealthy stop supporting life's amenities: no more grants to symphonies, museums, university endowments, parks, and so on. If these amenities are to continue to exist, the state must fund them directly. The state invariably will use a utilitarian calculus in deciding what to fund. One gray vision

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starts to prevail, not a thousand or hundreds of thousands of varied visions. Jouvenel implies that a bourgeois society is much more likely to support high culture than is a redistributionist state.

Jouvenel knew that the impulse to shake down the rich and give to the poor is a permanent temptation in democratic capitalist regimes. There will always be calls from those whom the market had not benefited to redress their plight through politics; and there will always be politicians ready to hear them out. Redistributionism is unlikely ever to disappear in modern societies, but we can try to limit its reach.

A real science of politics

Jouvenel's final contribution to the study of politics is a detailed analysis of its workings, not as a replacement for reflection on the good (as undertaken in *Sovereignty*) but as a supplement to it. The hope is to make political science useful to the statesman, who, as we have seen, has a responsibility of cultivating the social friendship and civility that vivifies the free society and slows the Minotaur's advance. Jouvenel's most ambitious effort in this vein is a difficult, chiseled book first published in 1963 and recently reissued by Liberty Fund Press: *The Pure Theory of Politics*.

This book focuses not on political *statics* (the juridical forms of constitutions and institutions) but on political *dynamics*: the phenomenon of "man moving man." One source of this influence is what Cicero called *potestas*: the authority that inheres in someone because of his institutional position. The U.S. military brass may not have liked the idea of draft-dodging ex-hippie Bill Clinton being their commander-in-chief, but their respect for the *potestas* of the presidency meant they jumped when he said jump. The other source is *potentia*: authority based on the raw ability to get men to do your bidding and follow your lead. It is the influence of an effective basketball coach or teacher, or, most importantly for Jouvenel's purpose, of the charismatic politician. It is as natural as rain.

Potentia can be a good thing in politics. Churchill's heroic rallying of the English people during World War II would have been unthinkable if he did not possess it. It can also be

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dangerously irrational, tapping into the volcanic forces that can sweep entire populations away in grand passions. How else to describe Hitler's Mephistophelean influence over the Germans? "It is profoundly unsafe to assume that people act rationally in Politics," Jouvenel somberly notes.

The ostensible aim of *The Pure Theory of Politics* is description. Jouvenel targeted the book to an audience of American social scientists who thought that the study of political life should be as free of values as the study of physics. Yet the book is a subtle critique of their abstract social science. Dry academicians *said* they looked at behavior, but what they meant were things like voting patterns, not *strong* behavior, behavior of the kind that Machiavelli chronicles with such cold lucidity.

Thus the real purpose of *The Pure Theory of Politics* is to remind liberal democrats, who often place unwarranted hopes in human reasonableness, that politics is not always, not often, guided by the light of reason; it is often messy, sinister, mad, and tragic, as Thucydides and Shakespeare—Jouvenel's chosen guides in this odd but beautiful book—teach us. Chastened by this lesson, perhaps today's leaders will see the fragility of liberal communities and strive to create the conditions for the growth of social friendship.

Bertrand de Jouvenel's melancholy liberalism has a lot to teach us, though for those who like their politics sunny-side up, it does not come as good news. Liberal democracies can attain true human goods, including meaningful freedom, social friendship, and widespread prosperity, Jouvenel reassures us. But these fragile societies must remain on guard, lest their many weaknesses—from the erosion of personal responsibility, to their tendency toward collectivism, to the abiding hope for final solutions—make dust of these goods.

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Community and the social scientist

WILFRED M. McCLAY

As most readers of this journal will already know, Robert Putnam's important and massively documented new book, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*,† represents an elaboration of his memorable and enormously influential 1995 article of the same name, published in the *Journal of Democracy*. In that article, Putnam argued that a decline in the number of organized bowling leagues (among other such voluntary organizations) signified something deeper and more ominous: a shift in our culture toward an ethos of radical individualism and away from one in which the pervasiveness of such organizations encouraged social connectedness and civic engagement. Such a shift was reason for profound worry, he argued, for if allowed to continue unchallenged, it would deplete and in time exhaust the reserves of "social capital" built up by previous generations of Americans, and upon which our democratic institutions rely for their very existence.

Such an argument seemed to have instant plausibility for many Americans, and the article quickly achieved the status of universal referent in the conversations of educated people. For a while it was popping up everywhere one looked, not only in academic settings but also in op-ed columns, Sunday supplements, academic anthologies, and the like. The plaintive image in the title, "bowling alone," was sheer genius, on an evocative par with some of the most popular social-scientific titles of the 1950s, such as *The Lonely Crowd* or *The Crack in the Picture Window*. Bowling, that most homely and unpretentious of middle-American recreations, was being paired with the wistful melancholy of anomie and loneliness, giving us an image powerfully suggestive of the way that solid middle-class values of cooperation and community were being eroded and

† Simon and Schuster. 540 pp. $26.00.

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scattered and marginalized in contemporary America. It seemed to capture—as such pieces do when they are so successful—some deep and nagging anxieties and premonitions tugging at the edges of an otherwise untroubled national psyche.

In that sense, the essay's success marked it as an expression less of value-neutral social science than of the revivalistic tradition of the American jeremiad. This tradition of sermonizing, traceable back to the great Puritan divines of colonial New England (from whom Robert Putnam himself is descended), had from the beginning a social function as well as a theological one. It is meant to call a wayward people to repent of its bad habits and evil ways, to recover the fervor of its faith and the intensity of its devotion to the community, and to resolve to change direction, to return to the straight and righteous path. There is a long and distinguished tradition of such works in American life, one that stretches unbroken into the present era, despite the increasingly secular content of its message in our day. Notwithstanding its use of the concept of "social capital" and other terms drawn from the language of social science, "Bowling Alone" was really a sermon, framed and disguised as a social-scientific essay, and that is precisely why it found such a large audience. Even secular Americans still have the habit of giving and receiving sermons, and the individual and social rhythms of revivalism—of the fall into sin followed by the call to redemption and renewal, of corruption followed by purification—are built into their very bones. What is peculiar about our present post-Protestant era is that Americans prefer not to have their sermons labeled as such, but rather as concealed expressions of disinterested and unmoralistic science, which was yet another point in the favor of "Bowling Alone."

OR at least it was in some readers' minds. Yet the article also excited much criticism from Putnam's fellow social scientists, some of it quite stinging and dismissive, which took exception to his theoretical and methodological framework, his facts, and even his claim that things were getting worse. As a consequence, Putnam has labored hard and long in this book to answer his many critics decisively, restate his findings boldly, and place them in a beautifully executed historical framework, which solidifies his claim that the second half of the twentieth century has seen a quantitatively verifiable decline in popular participation in American politics and civic life. In short, Putnam is sticking to his guns—and then some. Not only has he re-

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fused to concede an inch of significant territory to his opponents, he has extended his claims in important ways, seeking to establish the sources of the country's associational decline and the means of overcoming it.

It is hard to deny that he has accomplished much of that in the present work. While it will not silence his detractors, they have had to engage in something approaching willful misreading to continue to sustain their arguments against him. The review in the *American Prospect* by Garry Wills, for example, dismisses Putnam as a purveyor of Norman Rockwell-style "good-old-daysism," a careless charge that is not only verbally clumsy but completely unfair. In category after category of social life—participation in politics, religion, work, and the full range of formal and informal social associations such as Jaycees, PTAs, Lions, Elks, Boy Scouts, Red Cross—Putnam has produced solid and compelling data showing a precipitous collapse of civic engagement. On strictly social-scientific grounds, one would have to say that the book establishes his case compellingly and makes his argument a landmark with which any future writer on the subject of community will have to contend. As a piece of social-scientific research, *Bowling Alone* is quite simply magnificent.

MAGNIFICENT, and yet unpersuasive. For there has been something crucial lost in the transition from article to landmark. While *Bowling Alone* presents its reams of data and tables in as appealing a way as it is humanly possible to do, it has sacrificed the spark and poetry of the original essay, the winsome quality of being suggestive rather than definitive. This is more than a merely aesthetic consideration, for it goes to the very heart of what social science can and cannot accomplish.

Take the term "social capital." In the context of an essay, one readily accedes to its use, even with all its imprecision, as a metaphor, a shorthand way of describing the residuum of accumulated and aggregated social habits. One might wonder whether the word "habit" does not, in fact, serve just as well in most instances; still, there is some merit in comparing cultural accumulations with capital accumulations, so long as one does not get carried away with the idea. But the concept of "social capital" itself does not really correspond with the texture of our experience. It implies that there is such a thing as a nonspecific, fungible, flexible force of social association which can be drawn on for a variety of purposes with equal facility.

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But that is not the way that our most fundamental social associations operate. If I have an elderly mother who is infirm and needs my care, do I care for her because it contributes to our fund of "social capital"? Or do I do it because I love her, feel obliged to her, and regard the preservation and continuation of her life as something sacred—and, on the negative side of the matter, because I fear the disapproval of others, and of God, if I fail to care for her? Is not my caring for her a devotion that is, by definition, not transferable to other causes and other venues? Do these questions not answer themselves?

THE Viennese wit Karl Kraus said of psychoanalysis that it is "the disease from which it pretends to be the cure." This aphorism can be applied more generally to social science, and with a good deal more sober truth than its wisecracking manner might seem to imply. Social science arose with the dawning of modernity. It is no coincidence that wistful talk of "community" and "authority" as abstract concepts has arisen in direct proportion to the rise of individual liberty and the loosening of social obligations. The vocabulary emerged as a way of describing the things that had been lost or rendered problematic. A persistent sense of their loss is one of the prices we pay for individual freedom. The more frequently we have recourse to the word "community," the more we are merely confirming our distance from the very thing that the word signifies.

Such language may lead us into thinking that the restoration of "community" is something we can simply choose. But that is not necessarily so. The existence even of strong and enduring voluntary associations depends upon the existence of strong involuntary associations or highly compulsory ones. We associate mainly because we have to, for economic and other nonvoluntary reasons. And when we do not need to associate, we don't. We bowl alone. We marry and divorce and remarry, and otherwise install "choice" in the place of all other sacraments. And, if my mother has all her needs taken care of by the U.S. government, I may well feel freer to leave her care to the tender mercies of others more "professional" than I. She may even internalize the idea that it is a sin for an elderly parent to become a "burden" to her children.

In this sense, Putnam has used social science to identify a problem that social science lacks the ability to solve—and that it may, in fact, exacerbate. After all, the invocation of "social

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capital" as a category of analysis does not do one whit to promote the kind of moral renewal that rebuilds social capital. It can describe the breakdown, but it cannot repair it—and it may even perpetuate the breakdown. The vocabularies propounded by social science will not and cannot renew community, and will likely divert our attention from what can.

The proof of this problem comes in the book's concluding chapter, titled "Toward an Agenda for Social Capitalists," which even Putnam's most sympathetic reviewers have found unpersuasive. And rightly so. It is as if the book's final section were written by an entirely different man. Putnam has punctuated his summarizations with italicized, manifesto-like cries, such as the following:

> *Let us spur a new, pluralistic, socially responsible "great awakening," so that by 2010 Americans will be more deeply engaged than we are today in one or another spiritual community of meaning, while at the same time becoming more tolerant of the faiths and practices of other Americans.*

But a great awakening that meets all the advance specifications of a liberal social scientist is no great awakening at all. The spirit bloweth where it listeth—or it bloweth not at all. And the current assault on the Boy Scouts, one of the last remaining voluntary associations that continues to be vibrant and effective—but an organization that may well be run into the ground by the forces of "pluralistic toleration"—suggests that Putnam is kidding himself if he thinks that his desire for revitalized community life can be squared with his other desiderata: liberalism, pluralism, tolerance, multiculturalism, etc. Real-world communities are formed by principles of exclusion as well as inclusion, and it is a fond fairy-tale to think otherwise.

THERE is, then, an inherent instability in the social-scientific and hortatory mix characterizing so many of the great American social-scientific classics, from *The Lonely Crowd* to *The Culture of Narcissism*—and to *Bowling Alone*, which surely will come to have that status in time. That instability is inherent in the very concept of "community." Our ability to externalize this concept and reify it is a mark of modernity and of our enduring existential distance from it. There is a poignant quality to this insight, for it means that the modern condition always contains an element of mourning for community lost. But it a choice that we have made, a price we have to pay, and

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a knowledge that we are stuck with, though we will never rest easy in it. As Robert Nisbet observed, the whole discipline of sociology rests upon this strange displacement, the breakdown of connections that is characteristic of modern consciousness. Sociological knowledge makes us more aware of the necessity of the very things that its vocabulary declares to be off-limits. Which is another way of saying that it is indeed the disease from which it would be the cure. Of the making of laments for community lost, there is no end—nor should there be. But if Robert Putnam really wants to promote a great awakening, he may have to learn to speak and listen in a different vocabulary for his next book.

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Men at work

JOHN J. DiIULIO, JR.

THE Philadelphia neighborhood where I grew up in the 1960s and 1970s was Irish, Italian, and Polish, in that order. Nearly everybody prayed Catholic and voted Democratic. Dads were cops, firemen, bricklayers, or truck drivers. Some moms were retail salesladies or secretaries, but most stayed at home to raise their children. White-collar professionals and bums (we did not quite see a difference) were few. Adult drunks, but not young punks, were tolerated. Weekends were for fun and occasional forbidden pleasures, but, come Monday morning, everyone was expected to "answer the bell" (go to work and live responsibly).

Big families in one-bathroom row homes managed okay from paycheck to paycheck. Parish schools performed miracles: With one nun for every 90 kids, they still taught us to read, pay attention, and behave. Nobody talked about "race," but most people revered black sports stars, respected black co-workers, welcomed working-class black neighbors, and avoided high-crime black neighborhoods. When my father made a Democratic primary bid for sheriff on a ticket with the city's first major black mayoral candidate, a few neighbors got nasty, but most were curious, not confrontational. Nobody bowled alone, and you couldn't walk three blocks in any direction without somebody waving or calling your name. Hardly anybody went to college, and most who did stayed local.

In 1976, I enrolled at the University of Pennsylvania. Today, a quarter-century and several elite universities later, I still regularly socialize with my old neighborhood pals and their families, including a plumber, a pipe fitter, a car mechanic, a cable guy, and others who never surrendered their blue collars for white ones.

The U.S. Census bureaucrats lump us together as "non-Hispanic whites." Forget the Sicilian mother who balked about her son marrying "an Italian, not a Sicilian," or the Irish pal

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who used to let fly with Italian jokes but now gets teased by us "wops" because he married an Italian girl. Never mind that my friends and I have infinitely more in common with urban working-class blacks than we do with rural whites, ex-urban white evangelical Christians, and others who constitute America's 72 percent "non-Hispanic white" population. And so much for my younger cousin's recent marriage to a second-generation Cuban girl, which was reviewed by our side of the family as the best, most enjoyable "traditional Italian-style" wedding anyone had been to in years.

FROM my days at Penn, through graduate study at Harvard in the mid 1980s, I read much of the voluminous literature on America's white working class, and learned that many intellectuals had it in for us. We thought that, warts and all, we were pretty patriotic, loving, and law-abiding, but beneath it all was our "authoritarian personality." We knew more real-life Ralph Kramdens than Archie Bunkers, but that was a figment of our "de-racialized consciousness" (you know, the thing that subtly feeds "white hegemony"). We felt that most employers gave our working parents a fair shake, and that we would do as well or better if we worked as hard. But that was just our "false consciousness" talking white trailer trash.

In sum, we thought that we were basically good, godly people and solid citizens pursuing the American dream. But the intellectuals taught that we were wage-slave racists and churchgoing crypto-fascists, which, of course, also explained why we became Reagan Democrats, stopped joining unions, moved to the suburbs, and started investing in mutual funds. Frankly, I did not think that anything new could be said by academics about America's ostensibly socio-pathological, economically failing, politically duped white working class (we are also supremely anti-intellectual and devalue education), but Princeton sociology professor Michele Lamont has proven me wrong.

In *The Dignity of Working Men: Morality and the Boundaries of Race, Class, and Immigration*,† Lamont explains that working-class white males believe "blacks threaten what is good about American society" and "frame their own racism in patriotic terms ... because being an American is one of the few high-status characteristics they claim." Worse, it seems, white electricians, letter carriers, and warehouse workers have not

† Harvard University Press/Russell Sage Foundation. 391 pp. $39.95.

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studied radical sociology or liberal political economy. Imagine, "white workers rarely use structural explanations to account for racial differences ... [and] seldom refer to the socioeconomic situation of blacks or to their lasting experience of discrimination and white domination to explain their plight."

BUT all working stiffs and their prejudices are not created equal. Take America's black male workers, who "describe whites as nosy ... domineering, sneaky, manipulative, deceiving, and intolerant" while describing "blacks as more accepting, tolerant, straightforward, egalitarian, and fun-loving." But, hey, these "black perspectives on whites are not surprising given African Americans' experience of slavery, segregation, discrimination, and racism, which do not sustain a 'kinder, gentler' view of whites." Besides, more than their black or white American proletariat cousins, male workers in France (but of course!) "adopt antiracist stances," "view racism as a negative trait," and greet North African immigrants with open arms, a cross-national difference due "in part to the impact of republicanism, particularly on the social meaning of blackness."

Lamont's generalizations about America's working-class whites are based on interviews with all of 30 blue-collar guys from in and around Newark, New Jersey, that she "conducted in diners and homes" in 1992 and 1993. Each interview "lasted approximately two hours—long enough to develop a complex view of the ways in which these men understood the similarities and differences between themselves and others." Apparently, however, even with help from over 30 colleagues whom she acknowledges, it took about seven years to publish the results.

Lamont probably could have learned as much about both white and black working-class American men from north and central New Jersey by hanging out at a few pregame tailgate parties in the parking lot at Giants Stadium. But since all "data-gathering techniques favor or hinder the emergence of particular forms of discourse," feasting off the back of a $45,000 sport utility vehicle might have made it harder for her to conclude that "American workers are better off ... not buying too wholeheartedly into the American dream with its unrealistic promise that anyone can achieve material success if he or she's willing to work hard." Also, the sight of working-class white guys sporting the jersey of Tiki Barber, the Giants' black running back, might have bolstered Lamont's "postmodernist

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view of identity as constructed"—or at least as "constructed" by construction workers.

STILL, certain passages of Lamont's treatise ring fair and true. "These are not," she writes, "postmodern men who recreate themselves anew every morning." Rather, they are men who have "strong roots" in their communities and "serve as Little League coaches, volunteer firefighters, or in some capacity in the neighborhood school, church, or American Legion post." The book also raises at least three significant sets of issues about America's white working class and its economic, social, and political future.

First, Lamont is correct that "the living standards of workers have been steadily declining since the 1970's." A recent study by Public/Private Ventures notes that, in constant 1995 dollars, from 1973 to 1995 the average real hourly wages of workers with a high school diploma but no college declined from $12.17 to $10.46. Their sport utility vehicles are leased, and their American dream is being financed on credit cards that are usually close to maxed out. Most moms must work outside the home. Even two-earner working-class families have real trouble making ends meet in the suburbs. The Left, joined by big labor, exaggerates the problem, but the problem is real.

Second, Lamont reports that black working-class families are more religious than white ones, and that both white and black male workers, religious or not, "use moral arguments to draw strong boundaries against people who are violent and abusive." "Morality," she observes, "is at the center of these workers' worlds," and it is a mostly traditional morality, too. Boston College's Alan Wolfe may be right that middle-class Americans are not engaged in any real "culture war." However, Lamont makes one wonder whether systematic survey research might reveal hitherto unheralded class-based differences between, say, urban working-class folks, both black and white, who cling to traditional moral beliefs and customs, and suburban whites and newly minted middle-class blacks, who reject all that once they break the $50,000-after-taxes-a-year barrier.

Third, "Republicans," Lamont notes, have appealed to "the racially resentful—particularly the populist white working class," and promoted "a view of the Democratic Party as caring more about the needs of minorities than about those of ordinary workers." Bush's "compassionate conservatism" was lost entirely on black voters (92 percent of whom voted for Gore).

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Just the same, post-Clinton, and with crime rates and welfare rolls down, such race-sensitive appeals are probably history, and good riddance.

ACCORDING to the American Enterprise Institute's Karlyn H. Bowman, in 2000 the exit pollsters asked a question about class for the first time. Voters who described themselves as working-class, only 18 percent of the sample, voted narrowly for Gore, 50 to 46 percent. The self-described middle class, 46 percent of the sample, split 49 percent for Gore, 48 percent for Bush. If scholars and journalists really wish to take class in America, or the white working class in particular, seriously, then they are going to need more such class-coded voting and other survey data, plus much more and much better empirical research, both statistical and ethnographic. Though deeply flawed, Lamont's book is a start.

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Can art be defined?

ROGER KIMBALL

CERTAINTY is a marvelous thing. It not only provides a useful carapace against the onslaughts of doubt; it also does wonders for one's self-confidence. It is perhaps the one mental commodity that everyone, admirers and critics alike, will agree that the novelist-philosopher Ayn Rand (1905-1982) possessed in abundance. The attitude must be catching, for her disciples tend to be well endowed with certainty as well.

I thought about this when contemplating the title of Louis Torres and Michelle Marder Kamhi's book on Ayn Rand's theory of art: *What Art Is: The Esthetic Theory of Ayn Rand.*† As the authors note, the title is "a deliberate inversion" of the title of Tolstoy's didactic manifesto *What Is Art?* Most readers have found Tolstoy's brief for subordinating art to religion and morality sufficiently, not to say crudely, apodictic. But at least he had the delicacy to cast it in the interrogative. The authors of *What Art Is* want none of that pusillanimous hesitation. Rand's speculations about art and literature may exhibit some "shortcomings in detail," they tell us. Nevertheless, they argue that "in its fundamental principles" her theory of art is "coherent, substantial, and *valid*, constituting a major contribution to the literature on the philosophy of art."

The prospect of an aesthetic theory that is not only "coherent" and "substantial" but also "*valid*" is pretty impressive, not to say intimidating. Of course, "valid" is an equivocal term. It can mean anything from "following necessarily" to merely "sound" or "compelling." The authors of *What Art Is* do not specify in what sense they use the word. Several things suggest that they presume a fairly high degree of rigor: their decision to italicize the word, the air of impatient certainty with which their discussion proceeds, and their emphasis on the importance of having "*an objective definition*" of art. Indeed, it

† Open Court. 523 pp. $21.95.

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seems that one of the chief things that attracted them to Rand's aesthetic theory was her willingness to provide such a definition. At a time when there is so much bogus art about, they were grateful to find someone who cut through the morass and could tell them—clearly, without any foolish shilly-shallying—that this here is art, while that over there just doesn't make the grade.

I WILL come back to the question of defining art in a moment. First, let me say a few words in general about *What Art Is*. The book was a long time coming: more than a decade, the authors tell us. Their researches over the years turned up a lot of art-world exotica, and they were loath to leave anything out.

What began as a series of magazine articles slowly accreted into a 500-page book, the main text of which is divided about equally between an exposition of Rand's theory of art and an attempt to apply its lessons to the bewildering world of twentieth-century art. The book proper concludes with a chapter on "public implications": government and corporate support of the arts (the message: Here Be Monsters), art and the law (free speech, pornography, etc.), and teaching the arts to children (the more traditional the better). This chapter, which I found to be the most persuasive part of the book, is followed by three brief appendices: a list of "some of the alleged forms of art invented since the beginning of the twentieth century" (Pop art, Op art, Body art, etc.), a list of art-world buzz words, and a few pages of examples of how the *New York Times* uses (and misuses) the term "arts" in its cultural coverage. The appendices are followed by just over 150 pages of endnotes that qualify, elaborate, or comment on issues raised in the main text. It's a rich, opinionated mélange of a book, full of notes, asides, and second thoughts, but positively steely in its pursuit of its main theme: laying down the law about what does, and what does not, qualify as art.

I suspect that this book had its genesis in two distinct impulses: admiration for the writings of Ayn Rand, on the one hand, and impatience with the contemporary art world, on the other. The impatience is eminently justified. As one looks around at much of what is adulated as art today, one shuttles between weariness, incredulity, and revulsion. Of course, there is plenty of good art being produced today. But the headlines are mostly reserved for work that is unutterably banal, downright pathological, or, just occasionally, both. Everyone will

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have his own rogues' gallery and catalogue of horrors. Karen Finley, for example, earned her place in the annals of fatuousness by convincing the National Endowment for the Arts to shovel some money her way for an act that consisted of her prancing about naked, smeared with chocolate, while skirling about the evils of patriarchy. Or consider Matthew Barney, a hot young artist whose *oeuvre* consists of things like "Field Dressing (Orifill)," a video that depicts the artist "naked climbing up a pole and cables and applying dollops of Vaseline to his orifices." That description comes from Michael Kimmelman, chief art critic for the *New York Times*, who recently declared Barney "the most important American artist of his generation."

WELL, you see what Andy Warhol meant when he said that "Art is what you can get away with." The authors of *What Art Is* provide a generous catalogue of such stuff and the commentary it has elicited. Readers familiar with the terrain will not encounter any new horrors: The authors have just paraded the usual suspects to make their point. But most readers are nevertheless in for some surprises. For in their effort to segregate the sheep of art from the goats of non- or bogus art, the authors have discovered many, many herds of goats.

It is quite breathtaking, in fact, to watch as our authors consign virtually all of modernist and postmodernist art to the limbo of non-art. They begin by promising to provide the "ordinary person's" common-sense view of art with "the theoretical justification it warrants." They end up by denying the status of art to virtually every avant-garde movement since the turn of the last century. Pop art, conceptual art, performance art have to go, as does abstract art in its entirety: "The very concept of abstract art," they tell us, "is invalid." Cézanne is not mentioned is this book. Neither is Georges Braque or Matisse. Picasso appears in one footnote. All of these artists took painting a long way toward abstraction, and it would be interesting to know whether our authors thought they qualified as artists. Kandinsky, Malevich, and Mondrian fail to make the grade, as do Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, and David Smith.

It's the same in other genres. Schoenberg "was inspired by a misguided desire to expand the expressive range of his art." Merce Cunningham "opened a Pandora's box that had yet to be closed." James Joyce and Samuel Beckett were obscurantist poseurs. And poor John Ashbery "is not a poet at all." Photography, they conclude, cannot really be considered a form of

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art, nor can architecture. Our authors are correspondingly severe about the critics who championed any of this work. Meyer Schapiro is taken to task for his "spurious elitist perspective," Clement Greenberg for his "subjectivist elitism," Hilton Kramer for his allegiance to "formalist" values. Even Roger Kimball, it pains me to note, is rubbished for "counterfeit elitism," among other sins.

IT is easy to sympathize with the exasperation that prompted *What Art Is*. We really do live at a time when *anything* can be hailed as a work of art. This has naturally led to a proliferation of pretentious and often pathological nonsense in the art world. But in their effort to introduce sanity to the discussion of art, our authors have vastly overshot the mark. Some of what they criticize deserves all the obloquy they heap on it. But in their pursuit of "an objective definition" of art they threaten to throw out the proverbial baby with the bathwater.

One problem is that art is not susceptible to the sort of definition they seek. Ayn Rand's detractors tend to view her philosophy as an adolescent form of Nietzscheanism—a sort of double adolescence, if you will—but she herself liked to trace her intellectual patrimony back to Aristotle. It is not surprising, then, that our authors frequently cite the *Poetics* in their exposition of Rand's theory of art. Even more pertinent, however, is Aristotle's observation, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, that "the same exactness must not be expected in all departments of philosophy" and that "it is the mark of an educated mind to expect that amount of exactness which the nature of the particular subject admits." Like many important things in life, art cannot usefully be defined. What matters is experience, not a priori prescription. Any true definition of art will have to be so general as to be vacuous.

So it is with Ayn Rand. Her definition of art as "a selective re-creation of reality according to an artist's metaphysical value-judgments" is hardly more helpful than her characterization of art as "the technology of the soul." Kant was right when he noted that

> there can be no objective rule of taste which shall determine by means of concepts what is beautiful. For every judgment from this source is aesthetical, i.e., the feeling of the subject. To seek for a principle of taste which shall furnish, by means of definite concepts, a universal criterion of the beautiful is fruitless trouble, because what is sought is impossible and self-contradictory.

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Our authors say a lot of lofty things about art. They tell us that for Ayn Rand "art is a unique means of integrating the physical and psychological aspects of human existence," that "art is the indispensable medium for the communication of a moral ideal," and so on. The problem is that lots of things that would qualify as art even on their restrictive definition conspicuously lack the Wagnerian density they desire.

Our authors tell us that "if a critical judgment is based on a mistaken notion of the nature of art, as distinct from that of other human endeavors, it necessarily forfeits its claim to respect or consideration." But in fact, persuasive critical judgments about art rely not upon possession of the correct "formal definition" of art but upon the exercise of taste. This is not to say that judgments about art are purely subjective, but it is to say that the common ground of taste can never be conceptually demonstrated. In Kant's telling formula, in judgments of taste "we woo the agreement" of others by appealing to a common sense we presuppose but cannot prove.

I DO not like Andy Warhol or Karen Finley or Robert Mapplethorpe or Marcel Duchamp any more than our authors do. But it is silly to deny that what they produced was art. It just doesn't get us anywhere. This is even true in the case of Duchamp, who intended his Dadaist pranks to undermine the very idea of art. It may be unfortunate that anything can be accorded the status of art in our society. It may token an important spiritual breakdown as well as a massive failure of nerve. But the real issue is not whether a given object or behavior qualifies as art but rather whether it should be regarded as good art. In other words, what we need is not definitional ostracism but informed and robust criticism.

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Compassion gone mad

ERIC COHEN

IF a neoconservative is a liberal mugged by reality, then Heather Mac Donald may be the most neoconservative person alive, given the many muggings she has put herself through in the last five years. From inner-city schools to law schools, from foundations to museums, from public health centers to homeless shelters, Mac Donald has done her own one-woman run through the institutions. Her many essays in *City Journal*, now collected in *The Burden of Bad Ideas*,† tell a story of "compassion gone mad," a parable of how the "destructive and blinding ideas" of intellectuals and activists have wreaked havoc on America's cities and culture and on the lives of the urban poor.

Take Edgar Miranda, one of the many orthodox radicals that Mac Donald meets on her travels. Miranda teaches "Hip Hop 101" at El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice, a public high school in Brooklyn. The course includes sections on graffiti-making, rapping, dee-jaying, and break-dancing. The students watch movies on the "hip-hop revolution," take tests on "graffiti style," and are evaluated on their commitment to social and economic justice. When asked if his students take their graffiti lessons to the streets, Miranda replies, with a laugh: "I have no knowledge of it, nor do I care to find out." When asked if students are allowed to paint graffiti on El Puente Academy, he says: "How we look at it is, they don't tag their own home." (Just other people's homes.) When asked why students should be learning about "hip-hop culture" at all, Miranda gives a predictable triad of answers: Hip-hop is art; hip-hop is a "cry" for justice; and hip-hop simply reflects the "socioeconomic condition" of the community.

Mac Donald, taking stock of this example of "progressive idiocy" (she has seen many more like it in many other schools),

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is typically on point:

> That a school could embrace a practice both illegal and destructive of the city's spirit is a troubling indication of how far the educational system has lost its bearings. Desperate to show "sensitivity" to minority students and to create subjects in which they can unequivocally excel, schools have cast aside responsibility for academic and moral education.

TO begin to understand how this happened, consider another example: "Plain Talk," an Annie E. Casey Foundation initiative to reduce teen pregnancy by encouraging more open "dialogue" about sexuality and expanding teen access to birth control. The problem was that many of the communities the program targeted—especially immigrants—still lived (or tried to) by traditional moral codes, the very thing the progressive program rejected. "Stated simply," the program report laments, "the less assimilated, more traditional Latino and Southeast Asian cultures regard premarital sex among teenagers as unacceptable. They ... do not feel it is appropriate to discuss sex openly with their children." This is, the foundation executives reasoned, the wrong kind of moral diversity. So when kids took a "judgmental approach" to sex—i.e., when they spoke out in favor of abstinence—the program leaders sent them to "values clarification" workshops to become more "tolerant" of other life styles. When a young man made a sign that said "Plain Talk: Say No to Sex," the project manager pressured him to change it to "Plain Talk: Say No to AIDS."

Perhaps, as Mac Donald says, such initiatives would be more tolerable if there were any evidence that more dialogue and more condoms have actually reduced teen pregnancy. But there is not. And yet, as Mac Donald chronicles in institution after institution, it is not evidence that matters but myth; not fact but feeling; not real-life consequences but noble (though really ignoble) intentions. And so 35 years of misguided, often radically destructive programs and policies have devastated the lives and communities of the supposed beneficiaries, especially the urban poor. The "moral imperialists," as Mac Donald so aptly describes them, have won, and won big. And the very fact that these imperialists have not solved, but have worsened, many of the problems they claim to address—minority achievement, poverty, crime, teen pregnancy—means the passions are still hot and the quest for "social change" continues apace, its many myths still well-funded and intact.

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WHAT are these myths, where do they take shape, and what are their consequences? The first great myth, according to Mac Donald, is that all economic and spiritual poverty, especially among blacks and Hispanics, is the result of oppression—the oppression of a racist and sexist society, the oppression of capitalism and privilege, the oppression of Western imperialism and scientific reason. To the intellectuals and advocates that adhere to this myth, there is no such thing as self-destructive individual behavior, just social and economic forces that victimize certain groups. Thus, incremental, partial reforms are unacceptable and undesirable; the goal, as former Carnegie Foundation president Alan Pifer put it in 1968, is to revolutionize American society in ways that "the comfortable stratum of American life would consider disturbing and perhaps even dangerous."

Mac Donald chronicles the birth of this radicalism in the universities, the foundations, and at the *New York Times*—the three major myth-making institutions in American society. In 1912, the *Times* began its now famous annual "Hundred Neediest Cases" campaign to raise money for what the paper then called "the uttermost dregs of the city's poor." The appeal asked for specific amounts of money to help specific individuals—usually widows and orphans—who were considered the most destitute and deserving. The appeal was unabashedly moral and judgmental: "Because the Christmas spirit is strong within you, do not give to the professional beggars on the streets, unworthy, all of them, and often criminals." (Imagine that sentence today in the *New York Times*!) The foundations, led by the greatest philanthropist of his age, Andrew Carnegie, took the same moral approach: Help those who want to help themselves; do not give "indiscriminately"; do not shield individuals from the consequences of their own self-destructive behavior; do not make charity a public entitlement.

Over time, however, the philosophy of charity changed. In the 1940s, psychology replaced morality as the basis for the "Neediest Cases" appeal. Illegitimacy and juvenile delinquency became the products of "repressive childhoods" rather than individual moral failings. The distinction between the "deserving" and "undeserving" poor was abandoned. Widows and orphans were overshadowed by stories of family disintegration, which became progressively worse decade after decade.

By the 1960s, confrontation and entitlement had replaced gratitude and moral sentiment as the guiding spirit of the new "War on Poverty," which began as a series of Ford Foundation

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initiatives before becoming a permanent federal program. As social dysfunction worsened throughout the 1960s and 1970s—with skyrocketing levels of violence, drugs, and illegitimacy—the emphasis on personal responsibility declined. Instead, leading social theorists and foundation activists put the blame on "social and economic forces" and other "structural problems" that needed government solutions. And paradoxically, as the last remnants of institutional and legal racism against blacks came down, large segments of the civil-rights movement became more radical and militant. The noble goal of integration gave way to "race pride" and "community empowerment"; peaceful protest gave way to riots in the streets; the long, hard struggle to force America to live up to its own ideals gave way to a reckless attack on the ideals and institutions themselves.

In time, this radicalism domesticated itself into a political ideology, the second great myth of progressive social policy, which Mac Donald aptly calls "compassion gone mad." Mac Donald's great service in these essays is to provide firsthand portraits of this madness and its consequences. She visits the education schools to find future teachers role-playing "how to usurp the power structure" and learning that grammar is repressive. She goes to the Smithsonian to find that history has been rewritten to depict America and the West as singularly evil and oppressive, and Africa, Native Americans, and the East as singularly good and tolerant. She visits homeless shelters and social welfare agencies that leave vagabonds on the streets because "it would be wrong to coerce them to come inside." She goes to the courtrooms to discover that therapists now rule, and that their diagnoses of "mental illness" for drug use, violent crime, and all manner of social deviance are accepted as fact. She travels to the leading public health schools to find studies claiming that Ronald Reagan's military buildup is the primary cause of AIDS and that sexual promiscuity is a "sanctuary from racial hatred" and an "authentic voice" that should not be "silenced" by abstinence. In every institution, she traces the irrationality and social upheaval to its root—the false ideas of liberation and liberal compassion energetically imposed by elites and government agencies.

THE social wreckage Mac Donald describes raises new questions for neoconservatives and for all moral and political realists. The overriding theme of Mac Donald's book is that the ideology and social policies that treated people as victims of social conditions, rather than individuals responsible for

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their own behavior, destroyed the lives of the urban poor. But now that the institutions have been weakened, the family ruined, the culture demoralized, to what extent must policy makers conclude that individuals born into such ruins are in fact "victims"? Can a child born into the inner-city with no father, whose step-siblings all have different, equally temporary fathers, whose mother is a crack addict, whose tenement house is filled with sex-seeking, drug-seeking men, whose teachers and parents imbue him with the view that the root of all his problems is "white America," whose only window to the non-ghetto world is a television culture that celebrates ghetto values, whose president and most prominent black leader are both philanderers—can this child be held responsible for his own actions? Or is he not a victim of social conditions?

To say that it is impossible for such a child to transcend his conditions is false, since such examples of moral heroism and perseverance certainly exist. But to expect such heroism is itself somewhat unrealistic. Children born into madness are likely to continue that madness. And so when this moral-less child commits crimes, fathers illegitimate children, and deals drugs, he must still be punished, since society would wither (and may be withering) if he isn't. But inevitably this means holding individuals accountable for actions that, in a certain sense, are not fully their fault. It means accepting that life is unfair, and acting accordingly.

MAC DONALD, a brilliant observer of the culture, does not attempt to address such theoretical concerns as the nature of justice or the legitimacy of law and morality. But her work does help to clarify one of the crucial distinctions between progressives and conservatives: Progressives believe the world could be fair, and that their prophet-like job is to decry injustice and demand reform—often failing to appreciate the significance of the moral institutions they dismantle or the limits and dangers of social policy. Conservatives accept that the world is unfair and always will be, and seek to uphold laws, traditions, and moral institutions as the most just alternative to social disorder. The progressive sin is lack of realism; the conservative sin is inflexibility and neglect. Clearly, for the last three decades, it is the progressives who have ruled, and it is their sins that have left us in the quandary we're now in.

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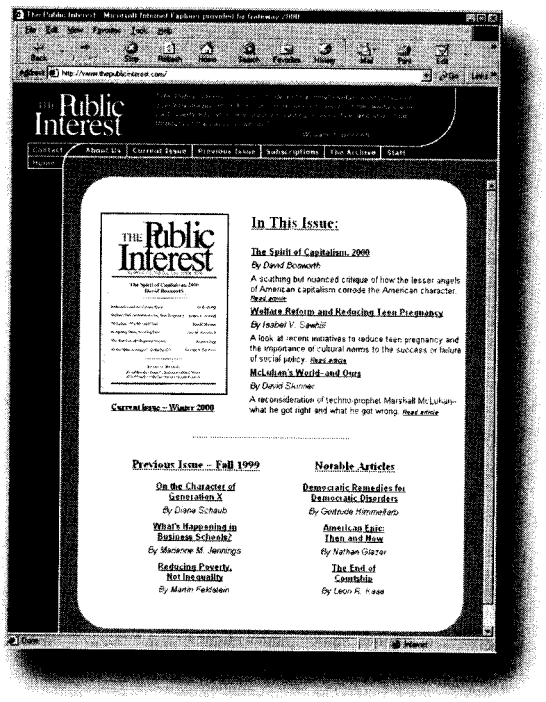

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